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**The self-perception of female leaders' professional development  
in selected Michigan higher education institutions**

**Kwak-Kwon, Samgeun, Ph.D.**

**Michigan State University, 1991**

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**THE SELF-PERCEPTION OF  
FEMALE LEADERS' PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN SELECTED  
MICHIGAN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS**

**By**

**Sangeun Kwak-Kwon**

**A Dissertation**

**Submitted to  
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**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

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**1991**

## **ABSTRACT**

### **THE SELF-PERCEPTION OF FEMALE LEADERS' PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN SELECTED MICHIGAN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS**

By

Samgeun Kwak-Kwon

The purpose of the study was to describe how female leaders perceive their competencies and the uniqueness of their professional development. A gender-sensitive perspective was considered from an integration of areas of the new psychology of women and professional development in higher education institutions. I focused on the learning experiences in women's leadership development, through the process of person-situation interaction.

The subjects of this study included 13 women administrators in public-supported universities in positions of associate provost, assistant to president, or academic dean; they were women who appeared in the 1990 edition of the Michigan Education Directory and were recommended by their colleagues. The methods of this study were open-ended interviews, written follow-up questions, and document analysis such as participants' vitae, articles, speeches, and written documents. By using ongoing data analysis method, I interpreted the collected data and presented them qualitatively using the respondents' own words and terms.

The uniqueness of female academic leaders was discovered in terms of mentoring, networking, and working collaboratively rather than competitively with people. Also differences among

female academic leaders were identified according to their role and exposure to women's studies.

The academic deans perceived people-related competencies as most critical for their professional development, while the central administrators perceived intellectual versatility as most critical. The major resources for learning such competencies were networking, work experiences, participating in conferences/workshops, self-directed reading, personal life experiences, and graduate training. Some of the participants perceived differences in the ways they received help from their male mentors and female mentors. And depending upon the way they perceived the relationships with their mentors the female leaders responded differently in developing their subsequent mentee relationships.

The female leaders' gender specific experience was identified as a unique advantage for their leadership development in terms of cooperative human skills rather than competition. Perceptions of women's professional development differed among the participants, and three types of female leaders were identified in viewing female uniqueness: (1) rejecting gender-difference; (2) observing gender-difference; and (3) claiming female-uniqueness as an advantage. However, their shared professional values were identified as honesty, trust, integrity, harmony, relationships, and equity/fairness.

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Dedicated to

My father, Young-Il Kwak, M.D.

and

my mother, B. Soon Lee-Kwak

who provided the sane childhood environment  
that made this dream possible to me.

and

my mother-in-law, M. Sook Ryou-Kwon

who supported and believed in me.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES . . . . .	xi
 CHAPTER	
I. THE STUDY	
Introduction . . . . .	1
Statement of the Problem . . . . .	3
Rationale for the Study . . . . .	5
Purposes of the Study . . . . .	9
Research Questions . . . . .	11
Limitations . . . . .	12
Definition of Terms . . . . .	13
Summary and Overview . . . . .	16
 II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE . . . . .	
	17
Research on Female Leadership . . . . .	17
Leadership Competencies in Higher Education Institutions . . . . .	24
Female Leaders' Learning in the Workplace . . . . .	29
The Uniqueness of Female Leaders' Professional Development . . . . .	36
Conceptual Framework . . . . .	42
Summary . . . . .	43
 III. METHODOLOGY . . . . .	
	45
Introduction . . . . .	45
Methodological Framework . . . . .	47
Subjects . . . . .	49
Data Collection Method . . . . .	49
The Pilot Study . . . . .	50
The First Round: Interviews . . . . .	51
The Second Round: Follow-Up Questions . . . . .	53
Nature of Documents . . . . .	55
Data Analysis . . . . .	56
Summary . . . . .	58
 IV. PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA: FEMALE LEADERS' PERCEIVED COMPETENCIES AND UNIQUENESS . . . . .	
	59
Introduction . . . . .	59
Demographic Information . . . . .	60

	Page
Critical Competencies . . . . .	64
Female Leaders' Learning . . . . .	78
The Resources of Learning: How They	
Learned . . . . .	78
Learning Experiences: What They	
Learned . . . . .	96
Female Leaders' Uniqueness . . . . .	115
Advantages of Being a Woman . . . . .	115
Disadvantages of Being a Woman . . . . .	123
Personal Strengths as a Leader . . . . .	130
Personal Weaknesses as a Leader . . . . .	133
Uniqueness of Being Women . . . . .	137
Summary . . . . .	141
V. Discussions, Conclusions, Implications,	
and Reflections . . . . .	142
Introduction . . . . .	142
Discussions . . . . .	143
Conclusions . . . . .	156
Implications for Future Study . . . . .	160
Reflections . . . . .	163
APPENDICES . . . . .	168
A. Research Permit Letter from the Michigan State	
University Committee on Research	
Involving Human Subjects (UCRIHS) . . . . .	168
B. Letter I to the Participants: An Invitation	
to the Study . . . . .	169
C. Letter II to the Participants: Request for	
Interviewee's Background Information . . . . .	170
D. Explanation of the Study/Consent Form . . . . .	171
E. The First Round: Interview Questions . . . . .	172
F. Letter III to the Participants: Request for	
Follow-Up Responses . . . . .	173
G. The Second Round: Follow-Up Questions	
(An Example: Brown) . . . . .	174
H. Letter IV to the Participants: A Reminder of	
the Follow-Up . . . . .	176
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	177

## LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
I-1 Stages of Research on Women in Administration . . . . .	8
II-1 Contemporary Stereotypes of Women and Men as Leaders . . . . .	22
IV-1 Demographic Data . . . . .	62
IV-2 Critical Competencies . . . . .	66
IV-3 The Resources of Learning . . . . .	79
IV-4 Professional Affiliations . . . . .	86
IV-5 A List of Recent Readings . . . . .	90
IV-6 Learning Experiences through Leadership Position . . . . .	98
IV-7 The Mentors of the Female Leaders . . . . .	103
IV-8 How Do Mentors Help? . . . . .	106
IV-9 Benefits of Participating in Conferences/Workshops . . . . .	112
IV-10 Advantages of Being a Woman . . . . .	116
IV-11 Disadvantages of Being a Woman . . . . .	124
IV-12 Personal Strengths as a Leader . . . . .	131
IV-13 Personal Weaknesses as a Leader . . . . .	134

## **CHAPTER I**

### **THE STUDY**

#### **Introduction**

Women administrators in top and middle managerial ranks are still marginalized in higher education institutions despite affirmative action in the United States. Whereas the conservative organizational culture has not shown improved reception of women administrators in higher education institutions, research studies on organization and leadership do tend to show shifts in terms of gender-sensitivity.

Two major shifts have occurred in the contemporary thinking about leadership studies that I referred to for this study. The first shift arises from such critiques of traditional views of leadership in organizations as (1) the perception of the top-down direct exercise of power, which is in the same scholarly tradition as the 'Grand Theory'; (2) personal traits theory which emphasizes the inborn talents of leaders rather than interaction between person and situation. Contemporary leadership researchers in this first shift view leadership from more humanistic perspectives which emphasize the need for shared values, trust, and collaborative efforts between leaders and constituents and which emphasize continuous learning and development of leaders in the situation.

The second shift involves a change in feminist theories. Over the past two decades, feminist theorists have increasingly moved away from attempts to attain equality by calling attention to similarities between males and females, toward a celebration of gender differences.

How do those shifts affect the study of female leadership? Studies on leadership development, gender and organization, and a new approach to the psychology of women have meaningful implications for the study of female leadership from a gender-sensitive perspective. However, those areas of study were rarely combined in the study of female leaders in higher education institutions. Women leaders have been a focus of attention in terms of their increasing numbers and their successful accomplishments. Also, the situation of female leaders has changed in the past 10-20 years. New features in the women's movement, in higher education, and in the organizations in Michigan in 1990s might have influenced women leaders in academe. Yet the female leaders' professional development has not been unveiled in higher education institutions.

This study explores the self-perceptions of academic female leaders' professional development. I examine the issue by emphasizing adult learning from a perspective of person-situation interaction and the new psychology of women in the feminist tradition.

### Statement of the Problem

Leadership researchers have struggled to define the concept of leadership and identify leaders' characteristics. In the past, leadership roles and research studies on leaders focused primarily on male participants and on their personal traits. The bias of these researchers is evident in their narrowness of perspective in dealing with leadership issues; that is, not including female participants.

The conception of leadership has changed continuously. It has changed from a concept of power, influence, and authority to an empowerment, transformational, or visionary concept. Jago (1982) defines leadership in terms of acceptance or noncoercive influence. Leadership has been recently conceptualized as "transforming," or capable of engaging persons in a common enterprise (Burns, 1978), as "empowering" of others (Bennis & Nanus, 1985), as "transformational," or proactive and visionary (Cameron & Ulrich, 1986), and as "feminist," or grounded in nonpatriarchal and noncompetitive values (Loden, 1985). Some researchers tend to pay attention to the unique characteristics of female leaders in defining the concept of leadership. Even though the concepts of leadership have broadened, the lack of understanding of female leaders or misunderstanding of female leadership style are still prevalent since the nature of female leadership in higher education institutions remain unanalyzed from a feminist

perspective. Feminist research or "women's studies" in the social sciences is reported to be closer to the humanistic, value-oriented category.

Women are typically excluded in organizational studies, in psychology and in social science areas. The invisibility of women in all disciplines was the one of the feminist criticisms in early stages (Glazer, 1977). Few studies have sought to analyze the relationship of gender to organizational behavior. More serious problems are caused by the misunderstanding of women resulting from inappropriately expanding or misusing the research results which were designed for men. Among the major current arguments that feminist criticism directs at social science is that it concentrates on the "distortion and misinterpretation of women's experience" (Westkott, 1979). Mills contends that various organizational studies have been conducted from a male-oriented perspective, which "at best treats aspects of organizational behavior as typifying men and women alike and worst, treat women as peripheral to organizational life" (1988, p. 351).

In the past two decades, women leaders have been studied by some researchers interested primarily in the area of business management and a few in school administration. Those researchers contributed to unveiling women's underrepresentation and the barriers to women's advancement to higher levels of administrative positions compared to male counterparts



(Biklen, 1980; Moore, 1984; Schmuck, 1976; Shakeshaft, 1985). The main theme of these studies is how to achieve equity between the sexes by abolishing barriers or by conducting some equity strategies. The standard was male, and females' traits were thought to be unacceptable and needing to be changed toward the standard male criteria.

This study assumed that different approaches are needed to understand female leadership, since women's emotions, personal relationships, and learning experiences differ from those of their male counterparts, thus the techniques they are using differ from men. When considering the term "leadership development" as a dynamic of the interaction between person and situation from a dialectical perspective, women might undergo different processes in experiencing personal and professional development in higher education institutions. This issue needs to be investigated.

### Rationale for the Study

Historically, the status of women in academe and in the scientific research society was seen as inferior. In an earlier period when the essential quality of the scientific mind was defined as analytic ability, women were thought to be unintellectual, deficient in reasoning ability, and warm and sensual. Only men were the producers of scientific knowledge. Against this tradition, Jessie Bernard (1979) describes the construction of knowledge as "the construction of the male

world" (p. 268). She pointed out that knowledge has been overwhelmingly male in subject matter, in assumptions, in methods, and in interpretations. To use Marxist terminology, men control the means of scientific production; women produce surplus value. In this perspective, it is necessary to study "women's studies" as a separate branch of knowledge to acquire those means of producing knowledge (McCormack, 1981).

The trends of scientific research are changing. As McCormack (1981) points out, at present when the history of science is being rewritten in terms of creative, Kuhnian paradigmatic leaps, the brilliant scientific mind is described differently: "a type of concentration that is loose, intuitive, a bit frivolous, if not, wayward" (p. 2). Along with this transitional change, it has been recognized that women's invisibility in social science does not necessarily mean women's natural inferiority.

Gross and Trask (1976) argue that sociologists had largely ignored how "the gender of managers of organizations might influence their operation and the careers of incumbents of these positions themselves" (p. 2). Also Gouldner had suggested the importance of gender issues in his appraisal of the sociological literature on organizational functioning:

Many sociologists who study factories, offices, schools, or mental hospitals take little note of the fact that the organizational role-players invariably have a gender around which is built a latent social identity. One does not have to be Freudian to insist that sex makes a difference, even for organizational behavior. (Gouldner, 1959, p. 412)

It is necessary to investigate how gender interrelates with an organization's operation and professional development.

Shakeshaft (1989) presents six stages in the evolution of research on women in administration as shown in Table I-1. The first stage documents the lack of women in positions of administration. The second stage identifies "famous" or "exceptional" women. The third stage investigates women's place in schools from the framework of women as disadvantaged or subordinate and examines "why are there so few women leaders?" Research on "Exceptional Women" focuses on personal qualities, early experience, and family backgrounds as the determinants of accomplishment. It may reinforce the belief that success is solely the product of individual ability, determination or effort. Under this framework, women managers have been described as overemotional and as lacking leadership qualities or the requisite interpersonal style (Crawford and Marecek, 1989). Any observed differences between women and men can be interpreted as evidence of female deficiency. Therefore, the notion of female leadership development can not make any sense, since the standard is the male leadership style. The uniqueness of females was veiled by women themselves who tried to act like male leaders.

At stage 4, women are finally studied on their own terms and the female world is documented. Stage 5 challenges existing theories in educational administration. For example, the notion that facts exist apart from values, thus making it

possible to obtain "value-free" knowledge, is disputed. In the fourth framework, female leaders might be studied from a gender-sensitive perspective and the uniqueness of females would be evaluated in women's own terms. But little study has been done from this perspective.

**Table I-1 Stages of Research on Women in Administration**  
(Modified from Shakeshaft, 1989, p. 13).

Stage	Questions	Approach
1. The lack of women (Absence of women documented)	How many women are in school administration? What positions?	surveys
2. Identifying "famous" or "exceptional" women (Search for women who have been or are administrators)	What are the characteristics of the women leaders?	surveys
3. Women as disadvantaged or subordinate	Why so few women leaders in schools?	surveys experimental and quasi-experimental
4. Women studied on their own terms	How do women describe their experiences and lives?	survey/ interview/ observation
5. Women as challenge to theory	How must theory change to include women's experience?	Analysis of theories/ methods as appropriate
6. Transformation of theory	What are theories of human behavior in organizations?	A range of approaches

Stage 6 transforms theory so that we can understand women's and men's experiences together. Producing an inclusive vision of human experience based on differences and diversity, rather than sameness and generalizations, will be

the goal at this level. As shown in Table I-1, there is a conceptual difference between women leaders from studying problems of women and the study of the uniqueness of women from a gender-sensitive perspective.

In the past, a number of studies on female leaders in business and education have focussed on stages 1, 2, and 3 in Shakeshaft's categories. Female leaders need to be examined from a new perspective using their own terms which encompass the psychology of women and the uniqueness of female leadership development areas. The research approach would need to be changed.

This present study, which had been started from an assumption that women and men have different experiences and will respond to the organizational situation differently, investigates female leaders from a perspective of women's own views on personal and professional development in higher education institutions. This investigation will provide rich information in studying women administrators. Also, by studying women leaders on their own terms from the gender-sensitive perspective, this study will contribute to describing women's unique learning experience and transforming the framework by challenging the existing mainstream studies of male-centered social science.

#### Purposes of the Study

This study explores women leaders' experiences in higher

education administration; that is what do female leaders perceive to be their competencies and uniqueness for their professional development? How do women leaders describe their learning experiences in the organization? There are some outstanding studies on women and organizations among feminist social scientists (Brabeck, 1989; Kanter, 1977; Feldberg and Glenn, 1979; MacKinnon, 1979; Izraeli, 1983; Ferguson, 1984; Martin, 1985) and on the psychology of women (Gilligan, 1982; Nyon, 1984; Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986; Miller, 1986). But the new knowledge has not been brought together in a systematic feminist theory from a gender-sensitive view in dealing with leadership development.

Most behavioral scientists agree that both personal and situational characteristics influence behavior. Even though organization researchers have developed interactional models, many have overemphasized either personal or situational components, and most have failed to consider the effects that persons have on situations (Chatman, 1989). In gender studies, for example, Kanter's (1977) study opened a new era in viewing women's lower status in organizational hierarchy by identifying structural factors instead of individual factors. But her study failed to illuminate women's real experience in organizations by neglecting to look at a person's potential to influence her environment from a psychological perspective of women and the interactions of persons and situations. Also Gilligan's (1982) prominent study, which suggests that women

and men have different ethics in their ways of making moral judgments, strongly focuses on persons from a psychological perspective and neglects situational influence on persons and its interactional effect.

This study explored the learning experiences of female leaders by investigating self-perceived competencies and the uniqueness of female leaders' professional development in academe, since their experience is different from their male counterparts, as some feminist theorists have discussed. The main purposes of this study were first, to explore what female leaders perceive as the major critical competencies they needed for their professional development in higher education institutions; second, to investigate how female leaders perceive they acquired the competencies they needed for their profession; and third, to examine what female leaders perceive as their unique qualities as women that helped or hindered their professional development.

### Research Questions

The main question of this study was "What are the self-perception of female leaders' professional development in higher education institutions?" There were three subsidiary questions to investigate the main question:

Research Question 1: What do female leaders perceive as the major competencies they needed for their professional

development in higher education institution?

Research Question 2: How do the female leaders perceive they acquired the competencies they needed for their profession? What are the learning resources and what are the learning experiences?

Research Question 3: What do female leaders perceive as their characteristics of "being female" that helped or hindered their professional development in higher education institution, and how?

### Limitations

My study describes women's perceptions of their professional development, the findings provide important insights into the experience of a select group of female leaders. The findings of this study should not be generalized, however, and this qualitative study strongly implies that women's learning experiences differ from those of men. Further research on women in other states and countries would contribute to the body of knowledge on female leaders' development in higher education institutions.

The findings are based on data I gathered concerning female leaders' individual professional development and their perceptions of it, rather than observing that development



myself over an extended period of time. Therefore, even though I focused on indepth understanding of the female leaders, the scheduled first-round interview, the follow-up questions, and document analysis have limitations in fully understanding the reality of their personal and professional life.

#### Definition of Terms

Academic administrator. The individual who has direct responsibility for the management of instruction, curriculum, or any academic programs within the institution (Green, 1988a).

Academic dean. The individual in charge of faculties and schools and thus ultimately academic programs. The person directly underneath the central administrators and to whom departmental administrators are responsible. In some small institutions, the terms "academic dean" and "academic vice-president" are synonymous.

Affirmative action. A term that covers governmental agency "efforts to get universities to analyze their own employment situation, examine the available pool of qualified women and minority group members, broaden their personnel search procedures to encompass previously excluded groups, and set reasonable hiring goals" (Abramson, 1975, p. 96).

Disadvantages. Those factors operating within the individual and within the organization that serve as

hinderances to the professional development of women in an institution.

Competencies. "The quality or state of being functionally adequate or having sufficient knowledge, judgment, skill, or strength (as for a particular duty or in a particular respect): range of ability or capability" (Webster's Third New International Dictionary, 1976, p. 463).

Advantages. Benefits that help the professional development of an individual in the organization.

Gender Sensitive Perspective. Gender-sensitivity is an approach which considers sex as a socially important variable. In a research component from this perspective, interpretation of sex differences and the different social positions of the sexes are taken into account (Eichler, 1988).

Mentor. A support person. "A wise and trusted teacher." One who will teach a skill or provide the necessary knowledge to perform a particular task. A mentor has an apprentice, a learner. A mentor may or may not be able to influence one's career and need not have any particular clout in the organization (Josefowitz, 1980).

"Old boy" network. Originating in Britain, the term "old boy" referred to an alumnus of a preparatory school or public school. The "old boy network" refers to the bonds, the upper-class kinship, established among British public school boys. These bonds were "supposed to operate throughout life in social and, particularly, in business and professional life"

(Shur, 1980, p. 173). As used today, the term refers to the male network of support and information sharing.

Organizational culture. Norms, rules, values, and beliefs "that are shared by members of an organization, that operate unconsciously, and that define in a basic 'taken-for-granted' fashion an organization's view of itself and its environment" (Schein, 1985, p. 6).

Professional development. A series of professional experiences of "people with substantial native gifts for leadership" in achieving what is in them to achieve and in developing "what is naturally there but in need of cultivation" (Gardner, 1987, p. 3). In this study, leadership development represents professional development which includes learning experience in the profession, participation in professional activities, leadership practice, and career advancement as well as the improvement of managerial skills.

Sex-role stereotype. "Displaying or adopting all or most of the behaviors traditionally associated with one's sex role, as delineated by one's culture" (Unger & Denmark, 1975, p. 819). In other words, it refers to widely held, cultural beliefs concerning appropriate male and female behavior. (Terborg, 1977)

Socialization. "The processes through which a person acquires the thought and behavior patterns of his culture" (Unger & Denmark, 1975, p. 819).

### Summary and Overview

This study explores the self-perceived competencies and uniqueness of female leaders' professional development. Chapter I is an introduction to the study. In this chapter I outlined a recent trend in the study of female leadership and presented the purpose of this study from a gender-sensitive perspective which integrates the new psychology of women and the new approach of female leadership development. There is a conceptual difference between the traditional approach of leadership study, which identified problems and successes of female leaders and the gender sensitive approach of exploring the uniqueness of female leaders' process of learning. The rationale for this study and the importance of investigating the professional development process of female leaders in women's own term have been described. The research questions and definition of terms were stated.

A review of literature related to the study is included in Chapter II. Chapter III contains the methodological framework and the data collection method. Chapter IV includes the presentation and analysis of data, and Chapter V illustrates discussions, conclusions, implications for future study, and reflections.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

To explore the competencies and uniqueness of female leaders' professional development, I reviewed literature from four areas pertinent to this study: (a) Research on Female Leadership, (b) Leadership Competencies in Higher Education Institutions, (c) Female Leaders' Learning in the Workplace, and (d) The Uniqueness of Female Leaders' Professional Development. Based on the review of related literature, I developed the conceptual framework of the study.

#### **Research on Female Leadership**

There is debate about whether the leadership styles of women and men are really different. Some quantitative research studies deny any difference between male and female leaders, while some other, qualitative studies, show differences between male and female leaders. In this section, research studies on female leadership in business, education, and social service organizations will be discussed in order to identify the meaningful characteristics of female leaders based on the research of several scholars.

Some research results suggest women and men are not

different in their leadership styles. Schein (1988) points out, from a review of leadership research studies, that the differences within each sex are greater than the differences between the sexes. That is, the differences among women (or men), considering variations in background, experience, and so on, are greater than the differences between women in general and men in general. Morrison, White, and Van Velsor (1987) investigated leadership differences at the Center for Creative Leadership. Based on their own data as well as other research reports, they concluded that "as individuals, executive women and men seem to be virtually identical psychologically, intellectually, and emotionally" (p. 85). Using those statistical data, they argue that there are no gender differences as a group in leadership style.

Few recent writers have advocated the existence of biologically based sex differences that affect the capability of women versus men to manage effectively. Instead, most writers focus on differences in the early socialization experiences of females and males that set up expectations for participation in the work force. Several typologies have been offered to describe leadership styles: (1) Lewin and his associates (1984) discussed autocratic and democratic leaders, (2) Fiedler (1978) distinguished between task-oriented versus relationship-oriented leaders, (3) The Ohio State Leadership Group (Stogdill, 1974) discussed the dimensions of initiating structure versus consideration. Among these typologies, all

three models focus on two different dimensions: leaders' work orientation and leaders' concern for constituents. Therefore, the three typologies can be discussed in terms of whether they are work-oriented or person-oriented. Leaders who marked high in "initiating structure" or task-oriented are work-oriented, but high in "consideration" or relationship-oriented are concerned for their constituents. Fleishman and Peters offered the following definitions.

Initiating structure reflects the extent to which an individual is likely to define and structure role and those of subordinates toward goal attainment. Consideration reflects the extent to which an individual is likely to have job relationships characterized by mutual trust, respect for subordinates' ideas, and consideration of their feelings. (1962, p. 130)

Generally, leaders vary in two critical types of leaders' behavior, initiating structure and consideration. Initiating structure refers to the extent to which the manager initiates activity, organizes it, and defines the way work is to be done. Consideration behavior, on the other hand, refers to the extent to which the manager exhibits concern for the welfare of group members (Powell, 1988). The studies mentioned to this point in the chapter do not clearly state how gender is considered as a factor influential to leaders' orientation.

Naisbitt and Aburdene (1990) contend in "Megatrends 2000" that to a great extent future leadership will come from women. They believe that female leadership will be the desirable leadership style in the future, because the dominant principle

of organization has shifted; since the principle of business has shifted from management to leadership, the role of managers should be changed. Will female leadership style be supported by the main-stream of academic society in the future? Naisbitt and Aburdene (1990) argue a leadership trend from order giver to facilitator as follows:

Today we are replacing the manager as order giver with the manager as teacher, facilitator, and coach. The order giver has all the answers and tells everyone what to do; the facilitator knows how to draw the answers out of those who know them best--the people doing the job. The leader as facilitator asks questions, guides a group to consensus, uses information to demonstrate the need for action. (p. 227)

Nevertheless, there is an argument that men and women who make their own way up the organizational ladder do not really differ from each other as much as our sex-role stereotypes would predict they should. Colwill (1982) suggests that the person who can tailor leadership style to fit a situation--sometimes manifesting masculine traits, sometimes manifesting feminine traits--will be the most successful in the long run. Also Powell (1988) indicates that women who pursue the nontraditional career of manager have needs, motives, and values similar to those of men who pursue managerial careers. He found that sex differences are not evident in global dimensions of behavior, such as initiating structure and consideration. Rather, he concluded that sex differences in specific behaviors are more evident, such as responses to poorly performing subordinates, influence strategies, and



accessibility to others that support the influence of gender stereotypes. For example, direct observations of managers at all levels in one study revealed that female managers were twice as accessible to others as their male counterparts (Josefowitz, 1980). Criteria for accessibility included open and closed office door policies, use of secretaries to screen out potential interruptions, and encouragement of telephoning at home on evenings and weekends. The sex difference in accessibility is worthy of note in my study.

There is some evidence from a range of aspects that female leaders differ from their male counterparts. Heller (1982) points out from her study in business settings that the current value of the masculine management ethic, which is emotionally detached, objective, and assertive, is clearly confused and changing. Heller's study includes 65 male and female leaders from business, education, and social service organizations. From Heller's interviews, two sets of images emerged: one set of negative stereotypes of the female and of the male leader, and another set of positive images. Women were described as being too focused on people and emotionally demonstrative; men were seen as being too remote and inaccessible. Both men and women were criticized for being too authoritarian and aggressive; however, this quality was attributed to men more often than to women. In Heller's study, women and men were seen as leaders with distinctly different characteristics (Table II-1).

**Table II-1 Contemporary Stereotypes of Women and Men as Leaders (Modified from Heller, 1982, p. 10).**

Negative Images	
Men	Women
Too focused on procedures Remote, inaccessible Authoritarian, aggressive Sexist	Too focused on people Emotionally demonstrative Not assertive
Positive Images	
Men	Women
Relaxed, humorous Separate work and social roles Think categorically Work independently	More humane Open, friendly Egalitarian Efficient and organized

Levine describes male administrators as task-oriented and offers a comment from a veteran administrator who was interviewed:

Many men seem to be so task-oriented that they ignore the human interaction or feelings of persons. Many operate from a hierarchical structure, passing on decisions or placating individuals rather than involving persons in cooperative decision making. (1989, p. 120)

Shakeshaft (1989) investigated the leadership styles of men and women in school administration by reviewing existing research studies. A number of studies have documented that in verbal discourse, women are more likely than men to express courtesy, gratitude, respect, and appreciation. Women show

respect for their audience through listening, echoing, summarizing, polite speech, and nonantagonistic responses. In decision-making styles, a number of researchers have found that women are perceived as being more democratic and participatory than are men. Also, Neuse (1978) documents that women are less committed to the formal hierarchy and are more willing to submerge displays of personal power in an effort to get others to participate in the decision-making process.

Studies of women and men find that women approach the resolution or management of conflict somewhat differently than men. Shakeshaft (1989) cites the studies of Bendelow (1983) and Hughes and Robertson (1980) and argues that women are more likely to withdraw from conflict or use collaborative strategies, whereas males use authoritarian responses more often. She notes that women have been evaluated as more effective at resolving conflict among staff members and in using conflict reduction techniques more often than men. Also Loden (1985) reports that male managers prefer resolving conflicts by competition and avoidance, with compromise their third preferred option. In contrast, she argues, female managers prefer collaboration and accommodation with compromise as their third preferred option.

Gender differences seems to have a consistent effect on interpersonal perception. Kohn and Fidler (1961) suggested that "females perceived significant persons in their environment in a less differentiated and in a more favorable

manner than did males" (p. 162). Female characteristics might affect the ways in which they behave and thus their leadership style.

By comparing men and women, the studies reviewed above contributed to unveiling the styles of female leadership as a product. But few studies explore female leaders' unique learning experiences as a process in their professional development. Women leaders' unique learning experiences deserve exploration from a gender-sensitive perspective. Rather than comparing the leadership styles of males and females simply in the limited sense of career advancement (as traditional studies have done), my study focuses on unveiling the uniqueness of female leaders' professional development in a broader sense, that is, including learning experiences in the profession, participation in professional activities, leadership practice, and career advancement.

#### Leadership Competencies in Higher Education Institutions

Bennis and Nanus (1985) define "leading" as "influencing, guiding in direction, course, action, opinion" (p. 21). Effective leaders are often described as individuals of great personal strength who are "visionaries" or "pathfinders." Mayhew (1979) distinguishes between management and leadership as follows:

Management means bringing all relevant information together concerning an issue, reflecting on it in rational ways, and making judgments and plans about issues.... Administrative leadership is the

presence of an enlightened vision of what an institution is and can become and the ability to persuade others to accept the vision. (pp. 74-75)

Argyris and Cyert (1980) differentiate between management and leadership focusing on resources. They define management as the art of allocating resources within the organization in a manner designed to reach the goals of the organization, whereas they see leadership as "the art of stimulating the human resources" within the organization (p. 63). According to them, it is possible to be an effective manager without being an effective leader. But higher education administrators have roles both as leaders and as managers. Kerr and Gade point out in "The Many Lives of Academic Presidents: Time, Place, and Character" that the predominant type of president is and has been over time the managerial leader who is concerned with the efficient pursuit of what is already being done.

Managerial leaders are contrasted with "pathfinding leaders" who are the visionaries, the agents of change, and are concerned with the long-run effectiveness of the total organization as opposed to the short-run effectiveness and the performance of tasks. (Kerr and Gade cited by Green, 1988b, p. 31 )

Higher education provides a unique context for the exercise of leadership. Higher education scholars have conceptualized the enterprise in many different ways: as bureaucracies, as hierarchies, as municipalities, and as political democracies (Green, 1988a). Administration in a higher education institution is unique, as indicated by Cohen

and March (1974) who named the university an "organized anarchy." Green (1988a) identifies some limitations of leadership in academe, such as the constraints of external regulation, traditions of faculty autonomy, shared governance, devaluation of overt exercise of power, and decentralized decision making. Therefore, as Green indicates, administrators have neither the heroic powers that derive from a hierarchical and homogeneous organization, nor are they obviously powerless since they have legitimate power.

The exercise of leadership involves power. Power derives from many sources: from threats and punishments (coercive power), from the ability to bestow recognition or rewards (reward power), from the acceptance of the group (legitimate power), from knowledge and expertise (expert power), and from the administration of the followers (referent or charismatic power) (French and Raven, 1959). Among these types of power, leaders in higher education institutions must rely heavily on legitimate power, which depends on shared values and goals. Legitimate power depends on the acceptance of the followers (Green, 1988a), and it is maintained by the degree to which the group continues to adhere to "the common and unifying bonds that produced the legitimate leader in the first place" (Fisher, 1984, p. 63).

Compared to industrial managers, leaders in academe spend more time on their own, working on activities that last longer (Oshagbemi, 1988). Academic leaders are the living symbol of

their institutions. They embody the values and aspirations of the college and its constituents, who project onto them their hopes and goals. Symbolism might be an eternal aspect of leadership. Gardner (1986) identifies nine tasks that are eternal functions of leadership: envisioning goals, affirming values, motivating, managing, achieving workable unity, explaining, serving as a symbol, representing the group, and renewing.

Green (1988b) emphasizes changes in the role of educational leaders: Whereas formerly they presided over growth and a seemingly unlimited future for higher education, they now must assume the role of "fund-raiser, financial manager, and politician" to obtain scarce resources and use them wisely (p. 32). Also he added a role for academic leaders as team builders, since academics are trained as "solo flyers," as scholars, researchers, and even teachers. Green identified the skills required to lead a team as conflict resolution, communications, the ability to process and screen information, and the effective use of symbolic power.

Cleveland (1985) describes effective leaders in the current information society as "get-it-all-together" generalists, characterized by their breadth, by their ability to see connections, and by their ability to extract and integrate relevant bits of information. He does not emphasize only the cognitive skills of an intelligent person. He expands the ability to process information wisely and make

good judgments, and speaks to intellectual curiosity, interest in other people, and the willingness to take risks. He emphasized that the education of men and women to manage complexity should be an important function in a society in which complexity is growing faster than anything else.

In addition to the general competencies as leaders, administrators in academe are in need of specific skills for their leadership practice. McDade (1987) identified most frequently developmental needs of administrators in higher education institutions. Those needs include speaking publicly, delegating, working with boards, planning, acquiring resources, working with governments, budgeting time, financial management/control, developing support, analyzing data, conducting meetings, cultivating constituency support, negotiating and resolving conflict, motivating personnel, framing programs and policies, measuring and evaluating programs, and establishing marketing strategy (McDade, 1987).

Hodgkinson (1978) points out that many administrators tend to devote most of their time to management issues, those problems which are more routine, definitive, programmatic, and susceptible to quantitative methods. Therefore, the difficult administrative issues, those "aspects dealing more with the formulation of purpose, the value laden issues and the human component of organizations" are generally neglected in practice (p. 5).

Managerial concerns have been the focus of the need for



management development for administrators in higher education. Also, the majority of the studies on leadership skills actually only examined subjects who were male leaders. Leaders whose environment is rapidly changing, whose institutions will increasingly reflect the diversity and fragmentation of society, will need different qualities and skills. However, few studies examine those competencies. Therefore, it is necessary to examine what competencies female leaders perceive they needed for their professional development in higher education institutions. In my study, those competencies are investigated by interviewing female leaders.

#### Female Leaders' Learning in the Workplace

Researchers in management and leadership have generally neglected issues regarding the socialization of leaders and managers. Managers and leaders learn continuously from their job commitment. For example, administrators can learn from their mistakes. One of the most difficult lessons an executive must master is that of allowing a subordinate manager to learn by being permitted to make mistakes. That is one of the ingredients in fostering the growth of a subordinate in the organization (Highman, 1985). Similarly, the research on college and university leadership has paid little attention to leadership development because it focuses largely on the end product rather than on the process

(McCauley, 1986); that is, it explores the nature of successful executives and organizations, and not the experiences or interventions that contributed to that success.

Recent studies emphasize that leaders are not born, but made. In these studies, the researchers follow the assumption that leaders can be developed through continuous effort before and after they take the position. In this changing society, leaders' pools of knowledge should be renovated through continuous learning. What does a leader do with the information that discrepancies exist? What does a leader do if practices which were successful in the past no longer succeed? The leader has to learn about the matter in any way that is necessary to do the job.

Learning needs and subsequent learning experiences might differ among leaders who have different life and work experiences in the past. For example, Kanter (1977b) argues that learning needs are different for men and women:

While men may need help learning about relationships and emotional expression, women need help learning just the opposite: the experience of power, task orientation, intellectualizing, behaving 'impersonally' and addressing large groups, invulnerability to feedback, and other new experiences in interpersonal behavior for many women. (p. 383)

Donnell and Hall (1980) found that women managers reported lower basic needs and higher needs for self-actualization. Compared with males, they reported, female managers were more concerned with opportunities for growth, autonomy, and challenge and less concerned with work environment and pay.

Also, Chusmir (1985) contended that women managers exhibited a more mature and higher-achieving motivational profile than the male managers.

Leaders' learning activities may not be clear enough to describe them in a systematic way. But even though it is nonconscious, the leadership learning process is similar to another adult learning process: self-directed learning. Knowles (1980) constructed an educational philosophy and methodology for adult education. He contends that using experience as a rich resource for learning is an essential aspect of adult learning. Self-directedness is a major issue in adult learning. Jentz and Wofford describe several learning steps.

Starting Points: Acknowledging discrepancies between intentions, actions, and consequences

Examining Practice: Confronting assumptions about self and others

Making New Sense: Entertaining the possibility of alternative assumptions about self and others

Translating: Attempting, in a protected setting, to invent and practice new behavior based on the new assumptions

Taking New Action: Using one's position as a leader, informed by new assumptions, to create the conditions for learning. (1979, pp. 6-7)

These five components are not necessarily sequential, but each could be a useful step in a leader's learning experiences.

Much of leadership development takes place on the job. McCauley's (1986) study contributed to identifying broad categories of resources of leadership development: job

assignments, other people, hardships or setbacks executives endured in their jobs, and formal training. Also McCall, Lombardo, and Morrison (1988) emphasize job assignments, other people, and hardships as learning sources. According to McCauley, most managers learn on the job, and challenge is an important source of learning. People also learn from failures. Recognizing one's limitations can be a potentially positive outcome of a failure. Another area, training, has received the most attention and certainly the greatest investment. Training programs cover a wide variety of topics --from specific skills to broadening organizational understanding and "personal revitalization" (Green, 1988a). Other people are important sources of learning--colleagues, subordinates, superiors, and mentors. Bosses and peers offer important learning experience because they can be sources of feedback. In addition, bosses can be positive or negative role models.

Mentors have received a great deal of attention in popular and in higher education literature. Levinson (1978) suggests the mentor relationship as one of the most developmentally important relationships a person can have in adulthood. He emphasized that the relationship should be marked by the qualities of intimacy, freedom for growth, and the presence of a nurturing structure. Also Sheehy (1976) studies the mentor relationship from a women's perspective and suggested that the absence of a mentor would make development

difficult. Moore (1984) found that the opportunity for learning, feedback from the mentor, visibility in the organization, and access to the mentor's network are all important benefits derived from the mentor-protege relationship.

Kram (1985) emphasized that the mentoring relationships helped the younger people learn new technical skills, become socialized into the organization, and develop career-planning skills. She identified two primary types of mentoring functions: career and psychosocial. By psychosocial functions, Kram (1985) refers to those aspects of enhancing a "sense of confidence, identity, and effectiveness" (p. 23) in a professional role including role modeling, acceptance and confirmation, counseling, and friendship. In contrast, career functions refer to those aspects of enhancing career advancement including "sponsorship, exposure-and-visibility, coaching, protection, and provision for challenging assignments" (p. 23).

Mentors have a subtle influence on their mentees as role models and same-gender role modeling is a highly significant influence (Villani, 1983). Josefowitz (1980) indicated that a woman sponsor has some qualities not found in a male sponsor: "She can serve as a role model. She also understands what it is like to be a woman in your position" (p. 96).

Fobbs (1988) found that women presidents are active on the national, state, and local levels in professional

organizations. She identified professional organizations as significant to women presidents' professional growth and career enhancement through their increased visibility, intensified networking, and heightened affiliation with professional organizations.

The process of building professional alliances is called networking. Networking links people to each other as career resources and supports and helps others find resources they need. Therefore, networking can be an important learning resource. DeWine distinguishes professional networking from the processes involved in a "support group."

Professional networking is a process of linking people to each other as career resources; and assisting, supporting and helping others to find the resources they need. This is different from [a] "support group" which are groups that meet to help one another cope with some psychological or physiological problem or meet because they share some common religious or political belief. (1983, pp. 86-87)

Support groups also serve as a good learning resource for women in the workplace. Green (1988a) emphasizes that "leadership enhancement" occurs in different ways for different individuals, and it is more self-generated and eclectic than it is susceptible to programmed efforts.

Considering the concept of culture as a pattern of basic assumptions--invented, discovered, or developed--the role of female leaders and their professional development are closely related with the organizational culture of higher education institutions.

Mills (1988) argues that gender is a cultural phenomenon, that organizations are a key aspect of a given culture and, hence, that organizational analysis needs to take account of the relationship between gender and organizational life. Mills suggests that complex organization bears on gender discrimination in at least three vital ways: feminine traits, gender identities, and organizational practices, for example, recruitment and promotion. One major feature is related to female traits as follows:

Cultural values associated with maleness are favored characteristics of many organizations--the assumed distinctiveness of males and females according to respective traits of reason and emotion is often mirrored in organizational processes which emphasize rationality and bureaucracy while seeking to suppress emotions associated with home and family. (p. 352)

Acker (1990) investigates the process of gendered organization by using the terms of organizational logic. That is, "organizational logic assumes a congruence between responsibility, job complexity, and hierarchical position" (p. 148). She argued that a gendered organization evolves from the process of gender stereotyping: Specific job positions in a job hierarchy do not start out being gender-associated; however, when a high proportion of women begin to occupy certain levels, gender stereotyping occurs, and job characteristics begin to be formulated according to gender. In discussing gendered organization, she refers to the points made by Steinberg and Haignere (1987), who argued that skills in managing money, more often found in men's than in women's

jobs, frequently receive more points than skills in dealing with clients or human relations skills, more often found in women's than in men's jobs.

These studies on organizational culture indicate that women in an organization are facing different issues from men, such as invisibility, stereotypical views, and lack of support. This implies that women may experience different person-situation interactions throughout their professional career. The academy needs to try to search for and keep the best leaders and especially to encourage the identification of potential women leaders who would bring unique talents to leadership positions. What do female leaders experience in the process of external adaptation and internal integration? How do female leaders learn from organizational life to cope with its problems and to accomplish their job responsibilities in higher education institutions? It is valuable to investigate female leaders' perceptions of their learning experiences which result from interacting with the organizational environment: the person-situation interactions of female leaders in higher education institutions.

#### The Uniqueness of Female Leaders' Professional Development

It is difficult to define what professional development should be. One thing that emerged from the literature review is that professional development, in a narrow sense, was defined in terms of career advancement or the improvement of



specific management skills for administrators, such as planning, public speaking skills, financial management and budgeting, and so forth (McDade, 1987). But for women, professional development is directly related to women's identity and personal issues, since, from a developmental perspective, growth implies complex and ongoing interactions between the self and the environment. (Levine, 1989). Therefore, a new definition on professional development needs to be developed from a broad developmental perspective for the study of female leaders.

In this study, professional development includes a variety of women's experience as female leaders, such as learning experiences in the profession, participation in professional activities, leadership practices, and career advancement.

Leadership is a combination of individual traits, learned behaviors and skills, and historical circumstances, which coexist and change in a highly complex way. Green (1988b) points out that the most difficult aspect of leadership development is working with individual personalities or traits, since an intellectual understanding of oneself does not necessarily lead to the desire or the ability to change personality.

Some assumptions are made in discussing leadership development. The primary assumption is that leadership can be developed through learning procedures that were mentioned in

the previous section of this paper. Sagaria and Johnsrud suggest that the growth and development of each person enhances the lives of all. Also, they contend that most work is enhanced more by collaboration than by top-down authority. In terms of leadership development for females, they valued shared decision making "as a learning and participatory process and as a means of enhancing outcomes" (1988, p. 16).

Hennig and Jardim (1977) advocate that men are better prepared to be managers because of such factors as their greater participation in team sports during their formative years. They see women as coming out of childhood lacking in essential managerial skills and traits. They believe, however, women could still be successful as managers and compete on an equal footing with men if they developed the skills they had not developed in earlier years. In addition, Pilotta (1983) suggests that many women in the organization have found obstacles to successful communication between themselves and their staff or between themselves and their supervisors. That is, women have perceived some communication difficulties as unique to them. These are the typical case of a male-centered criteria approach to the leadership competencies in terms of the "Women Deficiency Model."

In contrast, the new psychology of women tells us that women have human relationships with others which are different from the kinds of relationships men have with others. The nature of these relationships which are unique to women is

recognized by some researchers as an essential element of leadership skill. Gilligan's (1982) conceptualization of moral development--centered on relationships and caring about others--provides insights for the possibility forming a concept of female leadership which focuses on the value of caring for others. Heller (1982) shows, in her study on leadership styles, that women are more humane, egalitarian, and friendly. Also Shakeshaft (1989), as mentioned earlier, contributed one chapter of her book to identifying the gender differences of educational administrators.

Gilligan (1982) and Lyons (1983, 1989) have extended their study of gender-related differences in moral perspectives to the area of identity development. They have shown how the responsibility orientation is more central to those whose conceptions of self are rooted in a sense of connection and relatedness to others, whereas the rights orientation is more common to those who define themselves in terms of separation and autonomy. Women identify harmony and interdependence between persons as values to be cultivated in relationships (McEwen & Shertzer, 1979; Miller, 1976). Women seek achievement and competence, but they also speak of the need to balance achievement with affiliation (Baruch, Barnett, & Rivers, 1983). The caring and nurturing of others and the enabling of others to grow and develop are values long recognized in women.

Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule (1986) examined

women's ways of knowing and described five different perspectives from which women view reality differently from men. As they pointed out, it is likely that the commonly accepted stereotype of women's thinking as emotional, intuitive, and personalized has contributed to the devaluation of women's minds and contributions. These studies support the notion that women are different in their thinking, emotions, and relationships with others.

Marshall (1984) categorized three main themes of a woman-centered management style in business: (1) "a belief that women have access to more varied and what they called 'softer' techniques in personal relationships; (2) their understanding of and sympathy for, others' needs, particularly those of subordinates; (3) women's greater freedom of choice in relation to employment" (p. 160). She argues that women's approach to management is based on principles of cooperation rather than competition and a belief in honesty, authenticity and cooperation, and consistently rejecting superficiality, putting on false appearances and aggressiveness. The question is whether these styles are continuously developed through leadership practice. If so, why or why not? How do the leaders in higher education institutions experience the procedure of person-situation interaction in their leadership development?

Conoley (1980) indicates in her investigation that women and men encounter different problems when they assume

leadership roles. From her review of research studies on leadership, she argues that "the skills of leadership are not biologically rooted or genetically determined but rather shaped, facilitated, or stunted by social forces and the entire process of socialization" (p. 40). Institutional sexism and a history of differential socialization are powerful forces as well as an individual's belief. Therefore, in terms of leadership development, it is far more exact to consider, in addition to personal traits, the situational constraints, the task, and the characteristics of the followers.

While women's participation in leadership positions has increased for the last decade, the issues for leadership development have changed little with respect to women's special needs. As Shavlik and Touchton (1988) suggest, such women's issues as the rising numbers of women in the work force; interpersonal dynamics between men and women in the workplace; work-home conflicts; equitable policies and practices in recruitment and selection; and sex-role stereotyping in evaluation, promotion, and hiring are very important to the environment. Part of the reason for women's underrepresentation in the higher ranks of administration is complicated by sex-role stereotypes.

By participating in a male-centered administrative position in organizations, women administrators face a different situation from that which their male counterparts

face. How does the psychological uniqueness of women relate to women's knowledge, attitude, values, and their professional development? Such questions are worthy of exploration in order to understand how women enact their different learning experiences in their profession.

### Conceptual Framework

The review of literature shows that women and men differ in their leadership styles. But most of the studies see leadership as a product rather than as a process. To investigate leadership from a process view, it is necessary to explore the following: person-situation interactions and leaders' learning experiences, essentially from a developmental perspective.

There is a major shift in feminist theories: Whereas in the past, feminist theorists have emphasized equality between males and females, some current feminist theorists are moving toward a celebration of gender differences. In the past tradition, studies of female leaders focus on veiling the problems of women's underrepresentation or on examining some exceptional women, as Shakeshaft (1989) indicates. In contrast, the major concern of my study is exploring women's learning experience as a process of their professional development from the women's own perspective. The focus of my study is not only the quantities of managerial skills leaders obtained; instead, my study focuses on the qualities of

women's learning experiences in their leadership development: How/what do women leaders learn before and after they take their current positions; and how do they enact their learning experiences in their profession?

It is valuable to note that, recently, women's emotional, intuitive, and personalized characteristics, which were ignored and devalued in the male dominant academic society, are being revalued in a new way--from a gender sensitive feminist perspective. That is, a conceptual change is occurring in how women's qualities are observed. What does the Kuhnian scientific revolution imply about female leadership development? My concern is how the nature of female leaders, as intuitive, emotional, and relationship centered, is developed into unique characteristics of women's learning and their leadership practice. In this study, these issues are examined in terms of the uniqueness of female leaders' professional development.

### Summary

To explore the competencies and uniqueness of female leaders' professional development, in this chapter, literature from four areas has been reviewed. The studies on the new psychology of women suggest that women have different values and human relationships, which are very important elements in leadership practice. Women's unique characteristics have rarely been unveiled in higher education institutional

administration from a gender-sensitive perspective and in women's own terms. Research studies of leadership competencies in higher education institutions and women's learning in the workplace have been reviewed to highlight women's different experiences in organizations. In this chapter, an integrative definition of female leaders' professional development was presented in a broad sense, that is, professional development includes learning experiences in the profession, participation in professional activities, leadership practices, and career advancement as well as the improvement of managerial skills. The conceptual framework of my study was presented based on the review of related literature.



## **CHAPTER III**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **Introduction**

Among the educational research traditions, two contrasting research paradigms are called the "positivistic" and "interpretive" approaches. Positivistic is the perspective taken by the researchers who are attempting to discover the lawful relationships among the features. The other research perspective, interpretive, is taken by the researchers who are trying to discover the meanings constructed by the participants as they attempt to make sense of the circumstances they both encounter and create. This study used the interpretive approach rather than positivistic approach in exploring female leaders' perceptions of their competencies and uniqueness for their professional development.

Most of the literature in the management field advocates comparative male-female studies and analyses. The traditional studies on women focused on some exceptional women and tried to find the factors about "how to make it" (Marshall, 1984). In this case men invariably became the standard against which women's experiences were evaluated. Using men as the standard by which to judge women's behavior and career advancement as a general-purpose measure of success are the approach's most

powerful assumptions. They are concerned positivistically about its outcome by using systematic, scaled instruments. Female leaders' behaviors are regarded as fact, measurable quantitatively according to the same criteria as male counterparts. The problem with this model is that it neglects leaders' emotions and their perceptions based on their specific experience.

This study explored female leaders' perceived uniqueness as it affected their professional development, which includes learning experience in the profession, participation in professional activities, leadership practice, and career advancement as well as the improvement of managerial skills in higher education institutions. We find that each organization has a unique culture because constituents, tasks, and environments are different. Interpretive research allows us to examine such a culture.

Erickson (1986) used the term "interpretive" to refer to the whole family of approaches to research called ethnographic, qualitative, case study, symbolic interactionist, phenomenological, and constructivist. Interpretive methods are most appropriate when we need to know more about the specific meaning-perspectives of the particular participants and the identification of specific cause linkages that were not identified by experimental methods. Therefore, among the two research traditions, the interpretative approach was determined to be appropriate for this study in

investigating the specific meaning-perspectives of female leaders' learning experiences.

### Methodological Framework

I did not use any previously existing research instruments which had been designed to investigate "leadership style," since the conceptual framework of my study differs from studies which used existing instruments. A number of various biases based on gender is predominant in the discipline and the research area. Eichler's (1988) argument makes a strong point about these biases.

Eichler (1988) pointed out that none of us has ever lived in a nonsexist society. In theoretical terms, nonsexist society can be described, but we can not fully appreciate its nature until we are able to lift ourselves out of our current confining parameters:

We have been brought up in an intellectually limited universe. Our dilemma is that all our major concepts, our way of seeing reality, our willingness to accept proof, have been shaped by one dimension -one sex - rather than by two. For as long as we remain within this intellectual universe, we are incapable of comprehending its limitations, believing it to be the only world that exists. In order to truly understand our universe, we must create a vantage point that allows us to observe it both for what it is and for what it is not. (p. 2)

Becoming aware of sexism in research methods might be the first step in doing gender-sensitive research from a feminist perspective. When we are aware that sexism exists in research methods, we can avoid the biases try to reinterpret the

existing studies from a different perspective.

McCormack provides the rationale for feminist research as follows:

Assuming that reality is unjust, a just theory may be internally consistent but weak in supportive evidence. If we knew nothing at all about reality, whether it was just or unjust, there would be an equal chance of making a case for social justice or social injustice. (1981, p. 5)

As McCormack suggests, feminist research is a subset of those studies which attempt to embody theoretical concerns for justice. Like any other research, such as that on racial equality and class equality, feminist studies are socially-conscious, value-oriented research which have their own logical system, but the rules for verification are the same as descriptive research.

Peplau and Conrad (1989) argue for the importance of interpreting of data in terms of "old tools in new ways" (p. 382). That is, the method is important, but the way of using the method and the way in which the data are interpreted are critically important. In this study, I focused on women's learning experiences from their own perspective and in their own terms, in the belief that these experiences are valuable in their own right and that they are hidden under a male-created organization. Because I chose a gender-sensitive approach from a feminist perspective, I decided to use an interpretive method of analysis. This approach did not merely add women as additional subjects in studies that so far mainly have been interpreted through men's eyes. It was also an

attempt to change the conceptual framework in which that study takes place.

### Subjects

The subjects were selected from the following ranks: women administrators at the rank of president, provost, vice president, and academic dean who are working in four-year, public-supported higher education institutions in Michigan. The selection procedure was guided by the recommendations of women administrators in higher levels who have membership in a women's professional organization in Michigan. I found that only a few female administrators currently worked at top level administrative positions in each university. Two or three female administrators from each university were contacted from the list of the 1990 edition of the Michigan Education Directory. Sixteen administrators were contacted by sending a letter of invitation but three deans expressed that it would be difficult for them to participate because of their travel schedules. Thirteen of them accepted and participated in my study. They were five central administrators in academic affairs in a position of associate provost and executive assistant to president and eight academic deans.

### Data Collection Method

The goal of this study was to explore self-perceived competencies and uniqueness of female leaders. A series of

open-ended interviews, follow-up questions, and document analysis methods were used with the focus on work both for their professional careers and everyday life aspects. Before conducting the data collection, a pilot study was conducted to examine whether the questions would be suitable for collecting data.

The primary method was the interview. Interviewees' vitae, articles, and speeches were analyzed in advance for an indepth interview, and written documents such as publications, booklets, and information packets were used for supplementary data. According to Taylor and Bogdan (1982), the best way to understand the subject's experience is to begin the interview with an open-ended question. In this perspective, open-ended interview questions were developed for my study. (Appendix E)

#### The Pilot Study

To examine whether the interview questions are appropriate to explore the research questions, a pilot study was conducted by interviewing a senior central administrator. The interview was tape recorded and transcribed for analysis. It was useful for organizing and refining questions.

After I contacted one woman, an executive assistant to the president of a university, she told me she would be unable to work with me but gave me the name of the woman with whom I did the pilot study. Three telephone calls were made to talk with her, and the interview was arranged at a mutually

agreeable time. She completed a demographic information sheet prior to the interview. The interview was open-ended and lasted approximately one hour and 30 minutes. The actual interview questions were answered about in hour and 10 minutes, but I requested some comments from her about whether it would be desirable to make some changes in those questions. She recommended that I add some questions that would address women's experiences more specifically. The pilot study was a great help in refining interview questions.

After analyzing the results, some terms in the original interview questions were refined. Regarding the competencies, she emphasized analytical ability, critical thinking, writing, speaking, human relation skills, and political sensitivity. As for the resources of learning, graduate training was identified. She talked human relation skills, sensitivity, and intuition as advantages, and social bias and stereotypical view as women's disadvantages. The questions of "recent readings" and describing "learning experiences" were added after the pilot study since those issues were not answered directly during the first questions but were identified as very important in understanding the interviewee's responses.

#### The First Round: Interviews

When a one-week interval had passed after I sent the first letter of invitation to my study (Appendix B), I contacted the identified female leaders individually by phone. Among the 16 first contacted leaders, 13 agreed to participate

in this study. After they expressed their interest in the first phone call with my academic advisor and me, I sent them the second letter explaining the interview procedures and requesting written articles, speeches, and their vitae as background information for an indepth interview (Appendix C). Also, an explanation of the study/a research consent form (Appendix D), a sheet for demographic information, and interview questions (Appendix E) were enclosed along with the second letter. Four of the leaders sent their articles and vitae in advance of the interview, and six other leaders handed them to me right before the interview session. Three other leaders requested that I choose any interested articles and speeches from a list which they sent to me. Once I selected and requested the specific materials, they sent them by mail. Those correspondences proceeded in a timely manner.

I arrived 20-30 minutes earlier than the appointed interview time so I could talk with secretaries about the interviewee or review the vita the secretary handed me in those cases where the interviewee kept the vita instead of sending it to me by mail. Most of the interviewees were well prepared for our interview and I could see their thoroughness demonstrated by some written memos they had made on the interview question sheet that I had sent beforehand.

Each interview took one to two hours. The shortest interview took 55 minutes and the longest interview took 2 hours and 20 minutes. All the interviews were conducted at



their offices: 3 interviews were around desks, 8 interviews were around meeting tables, 2 interviews were around a table while having tea together. The last two interviews were most comfortable, since they talked without time restriction. Each interview was tape recorded and transcribed.

As the interviewer, I allowed the leaders to express their own accounts sufficiently in their own terms. After an interview, the interviewees shared written documents such as publications, booklets, and information packets of the university for additional information.

#### The Second Round: Follow-Up Questions

At the end of each first interview, I asked each administrator whether I could contact her again about the follow-up questions related to the responses of the first interview. All of them agreed. After transcribing and analyzing all of the first interviews, I developed several questions based on their responses. The follow-up questions were tailored specifically to each interviewee and they also drew on issues or information raised in the initial interviews with other informants. In requesting responses to the follow-up questions, I provided three possible options by which they could communicate their responses: (1) hand written or typed, (2) a face-to-face interview, and (3) a telephone interview. Most of them preferred written responses and mailed them to me. I found these responses very timely and very useful.

When I first sent the letter requesting follow-up

responses (Appendix F), seven leaders responded by answering Parts A and B and by filling out the follow-up questions. I obtained more responses when I made phone calls to the other six leaders. As a final reminder, I sent a third letter to the other five leaders (Appendix H). From these five, I received four responses by phone and found that two leaders were out of the country. In the end I succeeded in completing a second round of follow-up questions with ten informants. Those follow-up questions were more successful than I had expected and were extremely helpful in exploring more specifically the experiences of each individual in her particular situation.

The following three areas are the major issues included in the follow-up questions (Appendix G):

First, additional information was requested for selected issues. During the first interview, some leaders mentioned the areas hard to develop for their leadership competencies, their mentee relationships, and their professional values--topics which were not included in the interview questions as important areas to be examined. And some leaders talked about their strengths or weaknesses as an individual leader when I asked about their advantages or disadvantages. Those items identified as useful information and valuable questions to ask other leaders.

Second, a reading check list was included. When I asked about their recent reading materials, some interviewees

presented very specific information but others did not. The question of "what do the leaders read in their profession?" is important to understand. Therefore, more precise and specific responses were needed. To get more detailed information, a checklist of recent readings was developed based on the responses from the first interview. In this list, the major materials included were titles of books and periodicals (journals, bulletins, and newspapers--quarterly, monthly, weekly and daily), and also the names of authors were listed in case they did not remember the exact titles.

Third, more expanded responses were requested for each unique issue derived from the interviewee's first interview responses. In analyzing the responses of the first interview, some interesting issues were found that I wanted to explore further. Those issues included girls' unique relationships, women's intuitions, different ways of analyzing problems between men and women, experience of a female management program, different competencies for different administrative positions of the career ladder, meaning of success in their position, learning from female mentors, and so forth. I limited the issues to one for each interviewee choosing the one issue that I thought was the most important for that specific individual.

#### Nature of Documents

Thirty one pieces of work and 13 vitae were collected from the 13 leaders. Those include 12 published articles, 8

unpublished articles, 7 speeches, 3 bulletins, and one copy of a picture of an artistic work. Some of the leaders suggested that I request specific items that I wanted, since they had too many articles published to provide copies of all. Therefore, among these items, some were selected by the leaders and others were selected by me related to the issues of women, leadership, and higher education.

Their resumes, which included specific lists of professional affiliations, gave me a general understanding of their career patterns and the professional activities of a leader. Articles and speeches were used in analyzing the leaders' professional ethics, values, beliefs, and visions for the future in terms of female issues, the role of leaders, and higher education.

### Data Analysis

The primary data analysis method of this study was interpretive analysis of qualitative documents and interview data. As just described, data collected in this study were interviews, follow up questions, participants' resumes, articles, speeches, and written documents such as publications, booklets, and information packets. Interviews were transcribed and edited for analysis. I analyzed all the data in terms of issues and the meaning of the content. I used a content-analysis method for all the documents in order to identify the female leaders' competencies and their

uniqueness.

As Bogdan and Biklen (1982) suggested for qualitative research, I chose an ongoing method of analysis, beginning from the first interview and the first document I read, continuing up to and including the completion of this paper. After analyzing the pilot study and the first round of interviews, emerging insights, hunches, and tentative hypotheses directed the next phase of data collection. Merriam (1988) stresses the interactive nature of qualitative study in data collection, analysis, and reporting. In analyzing the data, I focused on the nature of the interaction between me and the informants, the interpretation of perceptions, and rich, thick description. Therefore, the data analysis procedure depended on my sensitivity and analytical skills. My own memos, records of reflections after interviews, and the insights I have gained and recorded at other moments were handled in the same manner as the actual data.

To analyze the interview data, I developed categories which described the clusters of meaning which I saw emerging from responses of each interviewee. After categorizing the terms according to emergent patterns, I checked those patterns with two outside readers for confirmation that the categories were suitable. I used the actual terms that appeared in the leaders' responses to describe the reported competencies, learning experiences and resources, advantages and

disadvantages, and strengths and weaknesses. Frequencies were used to rank the repeatedly occurred categories. To identify any differences between central administrators and deans, these two groups were counted separately in content analysis.

### Summary

In this Chapter, the methodological framework of this study was described. From an interpretive approach, my study used an interview and document analysis method to explore the uniqueness of female leaders' professional development. I chose an ongoing method of analysis beginning from the first interview, continuing throughout writing up my paper. The subjects of the study were 13 women administrators in Michigan four-year public higher education institutions.

I collected data during the first round, which was interviewing, and a second round, which was written follow-up questions, and between these two, I collected articles, speeches, resumes, and other information packets. These were analyzed through content analysis and categorized by meaning for each participant. Frequencies were used to rank the responses among the categories of each issue.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA: FEMALE LEADERS' PERCEIVED COMPETENCIES AND UNIQUENESS**

#### **Introduction**

In this chapter, I present data in four major sections. The first section provides an illustration of the demographics of the subjects. They are the 13 female administrators in the positions of associate provost, executive assistant to the president, and dean in Michigan four-year public supported universities. The work and competencies of the female leaders will be presented in the second section. In the third section, their learning experiences will be analyzed from two perspectives: How they learned (the resources of learning), and what they learned through their leadership positions (the learning experiences).

Learning did not occur through "separate, independent learning experiences;" rather it occurred through "connected, integrated learning experiences" in the female leaders' personal and professional life. As a result, some of the learning experiences will be mentioned in more than one section but will be handled in each of those sections differently, according to the specific purpose of presentation in that section.

In the final section, the unique qualities of female leaders will be presented from two perspectives: What the

female leaders perceive to be the factors that helped (advantages/strengths) or hindered (disadvantages/weakness) their professional development. I distinguish advantages from strengths, since I interpret advantages as structural benefits which are socially constructed ideas about women as a gender group, whereas I identify the strengths as individual benefits which result from particular personal qualities of each individual.

The results are based on interviews with participants and written documents, such as the interviewees' vitae, articles, and speeches. The data will be presented by using direct quotes from interviews and documents and through the use of frequencies from the content analysis of interviews. I present the two groups of leaders (5 central administrators and 8 deans) in two separate categories for each response, since they perceived the leadership competencies they needed and learning experiences from different perspectives.

Names will be used in citing quotes from the leaders to show a unique pattern of responses on specific issues for each individual; however, to protect their confidentiality, all the names are pseudonyms.

#### Demographic Information

The demographic information is summarized in Table IV-1. The deans were primarily academic deans of colleges and there was one dean of a graduate school. All but one are currently



assigned administrators. One interviewee had worked four years as an administrator and has now returned as a regular faculty member at the same university where she had served as interim vice provost. I requested that she participate in this study, since her experiences in a male dominated position at the university would be valuable for my study. To prevent identifying each individual, I present only aggregate-level demographic information.

#### Degrees and Major

The major areas of academic study of these female leaders were mostly in the areas of language, humanities, and social science. Eleven of the subjects hold doctoral degrees in sociology; family ecology; education; English; family studies and human development; social psychology; evaluation and research; library science and higher education; and philosophy. Their Bachelor's or Master's degree areas were in communications, mathematics, art education, political science, sociology, English, biology, and philosophy.

#### Years in College Administration

The average number of years the sample group served in college administration was 14.8 years. The deans' average number of years of experience in college administration was 16 while the central administrators' average numbers of years' experience was 13 years. The shortest number of years in

**Table IV-1 Demographic Data**

Classification	Aggregate data	Average of the group
Age	40 - 49: 7 50 - 59: 3 60 - 69: 3	Central Ad=49.6 Deans =52.8 Total =51.5
Current Position	Central Administrators: 5 Academic Deans : 8	
Final Degree	Ph. D :11 Master : 1 Working toward MA : 1	
Major	Art Education/Ed'l Administration English (Language) Evaluation & Research Family Studies (Ecology, Human Development) Library Science & Higher Education Nursing Philosophy Political Science Sociology	1 2 2 1 2 1 1 1 1 1
Years in College Administration	7-10 yrs: 4 13-18 yrs: 6 20-25 yrs: 3	Central Ad=13 yrs Deans =16 yrs Total =14.8 yrs
Years in Current Position	2-3 yrs: 2 4-5 yrs: 6 6-8 yrs: 3 10-12 yrs: 2	Central Ad =4 yrs Deans =6.1 yrs Total =5.3 yrs
Marital Status	Married : 6 Single(3)/Divorced(3)/Widowed(1): 7	
Number of Children	No Children : 7 1 Child : 2 2 Children : 3 5 Children : 1	

college administration was 7 and the longest number of years in administration was 25.

#### Years in Current Position

The average number of years that the sample group members served in their current positions was 5.3 years. The deans' average number of years of experience in their current positions was 6.1 years while the central administrators' average number of years in their current positions was 4 years. The shortest number of years in a current position was 2 and the longest number of years of experience in a current position was 12.

#### Age

The average age of the female leaders was 51.5 years old. Whereas the deans' average age was 52.8, the central administrators' average age was 49.6 years old. Seven of the leaders were between 40 to 49 years old; three other leaders were between 50 to 59, and the final three leaders were between 60 to 69.

#### Marital Status and Number of Children

Marital status of the female leaders varied. Six were married, 3 were divorced, 1 was widowed, and 3 were single and had never married. Among the six married leaders, two leaders each have one child, two leaders each have two children, and

one leader has five children (one of her own and four stepchildren), and one leader has no child. One divorced leader has her own two children but the other single/divorced/widowed women do not have children.

In this section, demographic information of the subjects, such as degrees, majors, experiences in college administration, current positions, and marital status suggest variation within the group. In the next section, I examine how this varied group perceives the competencies necessary for their profession.

### Critical Competencies

I asked the female leaders "What do you perceive to be the major competencies needed for your professional development?" The major competencies the female leaders identified as necessary for their professional development fall into two categories: competencies as a leader and competencies as a manager. They saw their two roles as leader and as manager of the college as distinct. As managers they manage, organize, and supervise the work of the chairs and directors, and they are responsible for overseeing matters concerning the budget. As leaders, they believe they have to be visionary and creative in moving the institution forward and in planning for the future needs of the students. They emphasized that being creative as a leader is essential in higher education today. As I explained in Chapter II,

administrators' role as leaders and managers can not be separated for each respondent. Rather, the leaders noted that they have dual roles and they needed competencies both as leaders and managers most of the time for their profession. Therefore, I categorize the perceived competencies according to the emerging patterns of areas rather than to the role expectations of leaders or managers.

In the first round, interviews, 87 instances of competencies were reported as critical for the female leaders' professional development. In analyzing this data, I used the actual phrase or term given by the leader in describing competencies, then I identified patterns of categories which emerged across these individual examples. In counting the instances, no double counting occurred. That is, if "budget skills" were counted once as an incident for an interviewee, then the same word "budget skills" was not counted again for that respondent. These emergent pattern categories were then checked with two other researchers to determine if they were suitable. I found some differences in the responses between the central administrators and the deans; therefore I counted these two groups separately. Frequencies of the instances appear in each table. The numbers in parentheses represent the number of interviewees that responded for that category. All of the tables in this chapter follow the same procedure.

Table IV-2 gives all the actual phrases and terms which participants used directly. Based on the responses, seven

**Table IV-2 Critical Competencies**

	Central Administrators	Academic Deans	Total (N)
Instances (People)			
People Related Competencies	10 (4)	18 (8)	28 (12)
Human Relation Skills	4	6	
Team Building		1	
Negotiating Skills		1	
Diplomatic	1		
Motivate People		1	
Build Trust		1	
Fairness		1	
Appreciation/Understanding		2	
Networking		2	
Sense of Humor	1		
Tactful	1		
Communication	3	3	
<b>Intellectual Versatility</b>	<b>11 (4)</b>	<b>9 (4)</b>	<b>20 (8)</b>
Analysis/Synthesis	4	2	
Information Dealing		1	
Critical Thinking	1	2	
Creativity		1	
Fluency with Numbers	1		
Quantitative	1		
Computer Literacy		1	
Writing	3	1	
Speaking	1	1	
<b>Situation Handling</b>	<b>3 (3)</b>	<b>7 (5)</b>	<b>10 (8)</b>
Problem Solving	1	1	
Deal with Crisis/Conflict		2	
Timing Decision		1	
Stress Management	1		
Time Management		2	
Being Organized	1	1	
<b>Financial Resource Management</b>	<b>4 (3)</b>	<b>7 (5)</b>	<b>11 (8)</b>
Resource Management	2	2	
Fund Development		1	
Budget Management	2	4	
<b>Vision-Related Competencies</b>	<b>2 (2)</b>	<b>7 (5)</b>	<b>9 (7)</b>
Being Visionary	2	2	
Broad Perspective/Generalist		1	
Linking Univ. with Other Sectors		1	
Image Making		1	
Take Risk/Courage		2	
<b>Organizational Understanding</b>	<b>4 (3)</b>	<b>1 (1)</b>	<b>5 (4)</b>
Sense of Org. Change	1		
Understanding Students		1	
Higher Education	1		
Political Sensitivity	1		
Understanding Org.		1	
<b>Self-Directed Learning Skill</b>	<b>1 (1)</b>	<b>3 (3)</b>	<b>4 (4)</b>
Self Learning Skill		1	
Good Learner	1		
Research Interest		1	
Learning by Self		1	
<b>Total</b>	<b>35 (5)</b>	<b>53 (8)</b>	<b>87 (13)</b>

categories of competencies were developed as follows: (1) people-related competencies; (2) intellectual-versatility competencies; (3) situation-handling competencies; (4) financial-resource management competencies; (5) vision-related competencies; (6) organizational-understanding competencies; and (7) self-directed learning competencies.

First, **people-related competencies** were the most frequently pointed out of any competency by the female leaders interviewed. Twelve out of 13 leaders reported 28 instances of people-related competencies. These include human relation skills, team building, negotiating skills, being diplomatic, being tactful, motivating people, building trust, fairness, appreciation, networking, and communication skills.

The leaders are dealing with a range of people: that is, administrators, faculty, chairpersons, executive managers, alumni, the clerical and technical people, and so forth. They need political skills, since negotiating is necessary between central administration and other people within the university, with groups of people outside of the university, and with the alumni. They emphasized that all the different types of people skills were very critical:

You need to know something about managing people, you need to know something about dealing with people, you have to know something about [dealing] with creative people, how to make them, to free them to be more creative. (Brown)\*

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\* I cite the quote with a name to show a unique pattern of responses on specific issues for each individual. As I mentioned earlier, all the names I use in this study are pseudonyms.

People are different. They're a lot alike, but they are different. And I think there has to be a real appreciation for those differences....And an acceptance for those differences. And an accommodation for those differences otherwise you're going to keep coming up against a stone wall. Because you can't have cookie cutter faculty. They're all different. And you can't have administrators who are all the same. (Powers)

Team building is an important competency for the academic leaders. To recruit and maintain an excellent team, the leaders have to be competent in developing a qualified team. A leader, whom I call Kelly, wrote in her philosophical statement that she believes in and supports faculty development. She describes her job as "to help others outperform me." Also, from the first interview with her, this perspective was clearly addressed:

Another skill that I think is critical is contributing to the professional development of the faculty that you're working for ... being able to hire people that are brighter than you or surrounding yourself with people that have skills that you don't have so that you can make up a team. Not everybody can have every single skill but if you try to fill in your empty spaces with people that can do things you can't do then you have a better chance of having a stronger team. (Kelly)

Most of the leaders saw the curriculum as primarily the responsibility of the experts, that is, the faculty. The leaders see their job as one of motivating the faculty, rewarding them, and helping to stimulate them to make sure that they are always providing quality service. The leaders have to reassess continually the curricula to provide quality education.



Second, **intellectual-versatility competencies** were identified in 20 instances as critical by 8 leaders. The female leaders' work is highly related to analytical ability, since they have to use a range of information in making decisions. One interviewee I call Sheldon emphasized the basic analytical thinking that is related to her budget skills. Also, she emphasized the competencies which revolve around knowledge and expertise in organizational-change strategies. She stressed that it is necessary to have these sort of quantitative skills plus some understanding of aspects of higher education and program structure curriculum.

Well, I think if you look at this position, it requires very good analytical skills, not simply to do budgetary kinds of things ... you have to get budgets to all balance and in terms of the allocations that go to individual colleges ... but it requires an analytical ability to try to look at implications of decisions that are made in programmatic, personnel and financial terms.... Because much of what we need to do cannot be simply bought by additions of new funds. There has to be reconfiguration and restructuring of the university, its values and leveraging, persuading, cajoling, doing a lot of things. You have to have a stance of an overall organizational change strategy. (Sheldon)

Third, **competencies for situation handling** were identified in 13 instances by 8 leaders. Situation-handling competencies include problem-solving skills, dealing with a crisis, making timing decisions, stress management, and so forth. The leaders emphasized that the ability to make proper decisions in various situations is critical to accomplish their tasks. For instance, one leader emphasized her role as

a decision maker by contrasting the differences between faculty and administrator:

The difference between a faculty member and an administrator is that a faculty member is never finished with anything, they're always refining, and refining.... Whereas an administrator has to make a decision right or wrong and then live with it because you can't keep puddling around with it. (Jones)

The toughest parts of their jobs were perceived to be timing their decisions appropriately as well as making the proper decisions. One interviewee commented on this point as follows:

No one is going to be patting you on the back and saying, "Well, that was a wonderful decision." The same with unpopular personnel decisions.... They may tell you in private but you make those tough decisions alone. And that's the toughest part of the job, I think, is decision making. (Kelly)

Also, the respondents needed to resolve the conflicts which result from various levels of the work situation. One leader mentioned the tension among male administrators about her being the only female in her position as a former provost:

You might say there's a tension or a challenge anytime you're the only female in an all male group. And that's happened to me a lot in my career ... but I think it's important if you are the only female or you are a minority in a group, to make them feel comfortable with you. And that's one thing I always try to do is put my male colleagues at ease. (Brown)

Fourth, **financial-resource management competencies** were identified in 12 instances as critical by 8 leaders. These include allocation of resources, fund development, and budget management. One leader described her work related to the

financial competencies as follows:

I have to be a good steward of the money, make sure it's spent well, legally as well as ethically as well as efficiently. (Powers)

The leaders said that equitable allocations of resources are very difficult but important. They sometimes suffer from resolving an issue of equitable allocation of resources. For instance, equitable allocation of resources on a group basis is important, but one of the most difficult tasks they have. Using cooperative ways of administering instead of top down takes a longer time and greater effort. One leader expressed her difficulty as follows:

Well, we also took a considerable amount of time and pain allocating equipment dollars and sharing how we did equipment resources. Well, and the decisions were really pretty good decisions but people are incredibly frustrated because it takes a lot of time.... I would like us to get together as a group and do that. (Kelly)

Fifth, vision-related competencies were identified in 9 instances by 7 leaders as critical. These include being visionary, creating a symbol of academism, image making, responding to the future needs of the students, having a broad perspective, linking the university to other sectors, and risk taking/courage. Five leaders strongly emphasized their view on setting a vision as an essential competency for leaders in academe. For instance, an interviewee I call Powers emphasized her role as providing some leadership, more than managing. Since the students will play their professional roles into the 21st century, they just can't educate them for

right now. She emphasized that the students have to be prepared for the next ten, twenty, thirty years of service that they are going to be providing.

I [sense] very much that I have to be a leader, and sometimes even a cheerleader. But to encourage people, to keep them thinking about their vision.... And so you have to keep drawing people's attention to what, it is what we're really about ultimately so that we'll move forward. (Powers)

In her annual college address, one leader compared her role as administrator to that of a captain of a ship who has to determine the right direction to take. At the speeches that she made on several occasions, such as an annual college address, administrators' workshop, and a Phi Kappa Phi keynote, she emphasized that leadership is much more than management and supervision. By leaders, she means men and women "who anticipate the future, who chart courses toward it, and who bring others along with them." Going further, in separate articles, she argues that:

I think part of the essence of leader is that being out there on the edge. And you're not always sure because the road hasn't been plowed ahead of you. Hasn't been paved ahead of you. (Brown)

The ability to be creative and not just the ability to be a good manager, I think that's important, but if all you are is a good manager you're not going to get very far. You have to be able to manage and to manage creatively and to keep the organization moving forward. The directions that are important for education today. (Brown)

Sixth, competency in understanding organizations was identified in 5 instances as critical by 4 leaders. Organization-understanding competencies include a sense of

organizational change, political sensitivity, and understanding students, higher education, organizational behavior, and so forth. Understanding students was categorized as a part of organizational understanding, since students are the major members of the organization. For instance, serving the diversity of students today extends to a different way of organizing the structure, curriculum, and teaching, because students are more experienced and have different interests and needs.

A central administrator also emphasized the political situation, and that they have to be sensitive to that.

Universities are politicized and there's a lot of just straight politics that occurs in an organization this large internally and when you look at this organization in relationship to other universities in the state, in the nation, to legislative process, to various constituent groups and you've got to try to navigate your way through all those politics. (Sheldon)

In understanding an organization, a leader emphasized the importance of understanding the major members of higher education, that is, the students. And she also suggested that the university needs to be organized differently than it is, since universities have to meet the diverse needs of students.

Today, in this institution, and as a matter of fact in most institutions, you find they [students] are in their thirties, their forties, their fifties. And for women, and women are beginning to dominate. They're coming back after their children are raised. There's a whole different cultural orientation at the graduate level. (Green)

For administrators, understanding students and their present and future needs are very important. Most of the leaders, by

doing some guest lecturing, try to stay tuned in and always have to be sure that they understand the new generation of students. Several leaders responded that they feel a real responsibility to keep themselves always aware of the students. And they thought they have to understand what their needs are, what their wants are as well. They emphasize that they have to learn and refresh themselves each year to understand the university, the students, and the world outside the university. To achieve this goal, they often have to take dual roles as teaching faculty and administrators.

Seventh, **competencies for self-directed learning** were identified in 4 instances as critical by 4 leaders. Self-directed learning competencies include learning skills, being a good learner, learning by oneself, and research interests. The leaders described themselves as self-paced learners or having the intellectual horsepower to learn. For instance, as a central administrator, Sheldon said that one of the difficulties that go along with her job is that she never knows as much about a particular discipline or sub-specialty as she needs to. When she has to make a decision related to each academic area, the decision is very hard because she is not a specialist in that area. In this case, she has to learn by herself. The other difficulty Sheldon mentioned is related to the allocation of financial resources among the academic specific areas. She indicated that when she talks with external groups or with groups of faculty, there are

difficulties since those groups see the university from their own perspective, unconnected to the many concerns which she must consider. She commented that, since very few people try to balance out the full range of the university's interests, she has to be able to try to sort through those kinds of barriers in conversation and communication.

You'll never know as much about the specifics of that area as the people who are involved ... that requires, then, an ability to try to cut through the jargon .... And it requires doing your homework regarding a particular aspect of an area ... You have some ability to be a good learner regarding various aspects of [all academic areas]. (Sheldon)

To be a good leader, Brown said, you need to be a self-directed learner who learns a lot of things on your own. Among their responsibilities, 6 leaders reported that there were some tasks they did not like or are not good at. Those tasks are bureaucratic writing, speaking in public, political gestures, attending a business-related dinner, and so forth. Two leaders talked about their feelings about doing bureaucratic writing. They said that they do not necessarily like bureaucratic writing but there are certain situations that require those skills. To avoid becoming a bureaucrat, they emphasized that they have to continue to read and to be a self-directed learner.

In the range of decision making ... it requires an ability to do that in a scholarly way. Otherwise you become a bureaucrat. And there's a lot of pressure in this system to be a bureaucrat anyway. So if you don't continue to force yourself to read broadly and then it's hard to articulate a vision. (Sheldon)

The competencies the female leaders need are similar to those needed by male leaders but the way they learned and developed those competencies may differ from the way the men learned and developed the same competencies. During the follow-up questions, the learning needs of female leaders' were identified. Among the competencies the leaders needed, several specific areas were identified as difficult to develop for the female leaders. During the follow-up questions, questions concerning the areas that the female leaders identified as difficult to develop, several leaders responded that public skills and budget skills were the most difficult skills to develop for them. One leader reported:

I have had difficulty developing subtle diplomacy because I believe in being open and direct in communications. But I find in this part of [the] country that is not a virtue. People are much more indirect in communications. (Dunn)

Five leaders out of 10 reported that subtle diplomacy, political skills, ability to delegate, and public speaking are the areas they need to develop. Three other leaders reported that budget management and finance are the areas they need to develop. And two leaders talked about their current learning tasks relative to computing/computer literacy. Maturity which includes a healthy self knowledge and self-respect, and a sense of empowerment were reported as the areas they need to develop.

One leader, Brown, said that dealing with people and dealing with many complex issues at once caused her to feel



weak. At the follow-up questions, two leaders, Brown and Sheldon, reported their difficulties related to their complex work load. One leader mentioned feeling pressured:

Not to feel the physical and mental pressure of 70-80 work hours scheduled each week in addition to the time required for preparation and follow-up. People who give up easily would find this position particularly stressful. (Sheldon)

The responsibilities change as the leaders ascend the administration ladder. One leader, who began as the department chair and was responsible for the provost position, commented that competence in dealing with a broader range of issues is critical. During the follow-up questions Brown emphasized that a provost must be knowledgeable about all academic programs and budget/personnel campus-wide. Based on her experience as a provost, she added that delegation of responsibility and prioritizing how time is allocated become most important.

As I have been increasing administrative responsibility, a basic competency required is the ability to assimilate much more information. To quickly be able to pull. Now a dean does not worry at the minute micro level that the department chair will, I'll be more concerned about how the chair, I believe in letting a chair do their job as a dean, when I was provost I let the dean do their job, so you're not as involved in the micro management, but you have to have enough of an idea of the macro management. (Brown)

In this section, seven categories of competencies were identified based on the female leaders' responses. People-related competencies were strongly emphasized by the 12 leaders. They also emphasized vision-related competencies and

self-directed learning skills as necessary to avoid being bureaucratic. Each of them tended to value being a leader rather than a manager and mentioned that being capable of learning on one's own is important to being a good leader. They identified public skills and budget skills as areas which they found difficult to develop.

In the next section, I will present the learning experiences of the female leaders. The first part of the section will focus on learning resources, and the second part will describe the learning experiences of these leaders.

Female Leaders' Learning:  
The Resources of Learning and the Learning Experiences

The Resources of Learning: How They Learned.

By asking, "how did you acquire the competencies?" I obtained 58 instances from the 13 leaders. The female leaders stated that the major source of acquiring their competencies was their own self-directed learning. Mostly they thought that education is a self-directed process, since a large portion of their knowledge and skills were obtained through their own effort.

They emphasize that they have to learn by observing and watching others, asking others, attending conferences/workshops, making mistakes, reading, and experiencing life. They also said that they have always been hard workers and they did not give up easily. After reviewing the learning

resources that they had identified, I developed six categories based on their responses as shown in Table IV-3.

**Table IV-3 The Resources of Learning**

	Central Administrators	Academic Deans	Total (N)
	Instances (People)		
Networking	4 (3)	13 (8)	17 (11)
Mentors, Role Models, Colleagues			
Observing/Watching Others	2	6	
Colleagues: Interaction		3	
Discussions/Talking to People	1	1	
Asking Questions		2	
Networking		1	
Friends	1		
Working Experiences	4 (4)	9 (7)	13 (11)
Past	2	4	
Present		2	
Internship	1	1	
On the Job Training	1		
Volunteer Work for Prof. Org.		1	
Out of Academy		1	
Professional Organizations	3 (2)	6 (5)	9 (7)
Conference	2	1	
Workshop	1	5	
Self-Directed Reading	3 (3)	5 (5)	8 (8)
Personal Life	4 (2)	3 (3)	7 (5)
Life Itself	2	3	
Raising Children	1		
Family Life	1		
Graduate Training	5 (5)	1 (1)	6 (6)
	23 (5)	35 (8)	58 (13)

Those categories are networking, working experiences, participating in professional organizational activities, self-directed reading, personal life experiences, and graduate

training.

### Learning Through Networking

First, 11 leaders identified networking as a learning resource in 17 instances. The ways of learning through networking with other people were observation of other leaders, role models, and mentors; interactions with others, discussions with people; and asking questions of and talking with colleagues and others. Eleven leaders responded to my question by saying that learning from people is the most effective way to learn and they preferred that way but felt that they could have had more help from resource persons. They were most likely to learn by talking to other people in the same university or to people in other universities (in similar positions and with similar problems), through professional and informal meetings, and through telephone conversations. Watching and observing others is a popular learning method for administrators in higher education institutions. Eight leaders reported learning by observing and watching. The following are examples of learning by observing others in the past, or in the present:

I just observed their administrative styles and how they interacted with faculty members. And a lot of that translated into behaviors, that I tried to, when I became an administrator. I tried to use some of the behaviors that I had observed that I considered to be positive. (Moore)

Be successful and unsuccessful and looking at what worked for them and what didn't work for them and what they did when it didn't work for them. I mean there's a lot of glorious case studies right on campus - who's successful and why and who's being

unsuccessful and why. (Green)

The female leaders learn by interactions with other people--by asking questions of colleagues or a specialist, or by calling a friend at another university. Requesting advice from an expert or a senior administrator is a good way of learning in some specific situations. One leader explained how she learned about legal issues from university counsel: she said she approached the person directly to seek advice. Another leader described herself as someone who likes to discuss everything enthusiastically:

I will seek advice about administrative issues. How I should handle things. I learn, you know, many of the things, administratively, how would you approach on this and what would you do about that? I will do that a lot. (Smith)

One leader commented that when she was a high school teacher she learned a lot from interacting with a good leader, a principal who was supportive, a good listener, a good motivator, and a good role model.

Asking my opinion, listening to my opinion. Saying that's a good idea and using it if appropriate. And to my mind, she was the first example of a real leader.... I loved going to work. I loved going to my classes. I loved going to faculty meetings which is most unusual.... And she was an example that I continue to look back on. (Powers)

What Powers learned from the principal was the importance of listening. She also learned the importance of extending basic respect to the people with whom she works and to those who are working for her, as well as the importance of listening. She concluded, therefore, that people can learn from good leaders

by interacting with them. But Powers also mentioned that people can learn by interaction with someone who is not a good leader, a person who couldn't tolerate disagreement.

That was a particular person who could not be confronted with problems. You could only talk to that person about good things.... What I learned is that to be a good leader, you got to be willing to have people around you who are "no" people. Who are willing to say, I don't agree with you.  
(Powers)

One leader responded that she could learn through a group of women--by being a member of a group which interacts supportively with each other. She called it "new girl network."

Women who are in administration and just about all of them have sort of, the new girls network.... The women administrators all get together to socialize, maybe over lunch or dinner, sometimes to socialize, talk about common problems of the institution and have really built a really caring relationship.  
(Allen)

#### Learning by Working Experience

Learning by doing clearly emerged from the interviews as the second major resource of learning. Eleven leaders identified past and present working experiences as a major learning resource in 13 instances. These instances include teaching students, administrative internships, volunteer work, on-the-job learning, and so forth. Respondents emphasized that working with students over a long period of time makes them particularly sensitive to a whole range of needs of other people. They learned how to work with other people and how to balance their pace with that of others. Five leaders

emphasized the learning they acquired, about how to work with people, as a result of their own work experiences. For instance, they cited the importance of having patience with the pace of others, understanding others, and being people-oriented rather than task-oriented:

In developing as an administrator, it was important for me to have been a faculty member, a chairperson and a dean. You know, moving up the ranks into administration was very important to me because I can understand now why faculty members respond quite differently from chairpersons and chairpersons respond quite differently from deans. And I think that deans respond quite differently from central administration.... And I think having served in those roles helped me tremendously as an administrator. (Moore)

They expressed awareness of the importance of having followers and felt that they made perceptible changes in their leadership practices and their leadership styles as the result of working with other people. One leader described being affected as a leader by her followers and the fact that she learned to listen to the followers.

The administrators also said that teaching experience was also extremely helpful for them, since understanding students and faculty are essential to their positions. Six leaders reported the importance of teaching experience in terms of understanding people. They emphasized that classroom skills do translate in a sense to dealing with other people as well, skills such as patience, maintaining an even temper, and having a sense of humor.

Also, the female leaders stated that their current

positions help them to learn in various ways. By doing their job or making mistakes, they explained they can learn needed competencies. To a question about learning which was asked during the follow-up questions, one leader, Sullivan, commented that she learned a good deal about university budgets during her years in the provost's office by attending many budget meetings. Another leader, Powers, gave an example of learning by citing her own mistakes in hiring faculty. When she hired a faculty member for a very important, newly created position similar to a chairperson's role, she expected that he would be competent in a lot of ways, but it turned out to be a very different situation. Therefore, in subsequent hiring situations, she began to check a lot of references, to have a longer interview, and to call more people to try to get them to tell her the truth about candidates for the job. She added that when she is interviewing people, his face often flashes before her. Also, an other leader reported that she learned from mistakes and emphasized that this included learning assimilation and accommodation in adjusting to different cultural backgrounds. She said that, as a minority, she learned a lot through working experiences and mistakes.

This is learning about being able to negotiate one's behavior in relation to other people. I am a very forceful person. I have a background that has encouraged me to speak up ... I've found myself yelling at people with whom I worked and they were cringing. They just couldn't stand it... eventually one day a secretary said to me. "You know, I grew up in a household where people rarely raised their voices and your yelling just tears me apart. I just can't stand it." So, I explained to her why I



yelled. It was a statement of my own condition, not a statement of anger at her. But that I would try to moderate that, and I did. (Dunn)

Two leaders reported that internship experiences were extremely helpful for them. They recalled that learning at other universities was a great experience. One of them, who had an American Council on Education Fellowship four years ago and had a year's leave of absence from the university, spent her year at the other university working directly with the president and two vice presidents. She served on their budgeting and program review committees. She commented that those experiences enriched her professionally.

#### Learning Through Professional Organizations

Third, the female leaders mentioned the importance of participating in professional organizations in 9 instances. Professional affiliation is an important index to these leaders' professional development: Seven leaders are active in regional and national associations in both their own academic major area and associations of college administrators. Table IV-4 indicates the professional affiliations of the female administrators of this study, either within their major study area (60 memberships), administrative area (22 memberships), or women's study area (11 memberships). This information is derived from their vitae and from interviews with them.

In general, six leaders reported being members of the American Association for Higher Education (AAHE), four leaders

reported being affiliated with the Michigan Academy of Science, Arts & Letters, and three leaders reported membership in the American Council on Education (ACE). These three Associations are the major affiliations in the general/administrational area. Nine leaders identified themselves as members of women's associations. Two memberships were cited for each of the following organizations: the Association for Women in Development and the National Association of Women Deans, Administrators, and Counselors. The identified associations with which these women are affiliated are the American Association for Women, Michigan Women's Studies Association, National Women's Studies Association, and so forth. Each leader in my study has at least one general affiliated association, but four leaders were not affiliated with any women's association.

In contrast, leaders reported 60 memberships in organizations with specific disciplinary affiliations. That is, each leader in my study is affiliated with about 4-5 associations in their field of study.

**Table IV-4 Professional Affiliations**

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<u>General/Administrational Affiliation (memberships= 22)</u>	
American Association for Higher Education (AAHE)	6
Michigan Academy of Science, Arts & Letters	4
American Council on Education (ACE)	3
American Association for Affirmative Action	1
American Association of University Professors	1
American College Personnel Association	1
Council of Graduate Schools	1
Council for the Advancement and Support of Education (CASE)	1

**Table IV-4. --Continued**

Michigan Advancement Council	1
Michigan Council of Graduate Deans	1
Midwestern Association of Graduate Schools	1
National Society of Fund Raising Executives (NSFRE)	1
<hr/>	
<u>Women's Association (memberships= 11)</u>	
Association for Women in Development	2
National Association of Women Deans, Administrators & Counselors	2
American Association for Women	1
Michigan Women's Studies Association	1
National Women's Studies Association	1
Detroit Women's Forum	1
Faculty Women's Association	1
Women's Economic Club of Detroit	1
Women's Sports Booster Club	1
<hr/>	
<u>Specific Disciplinary Affiliation (memberships= 60)</u>	
A.K.Rice Institute	2
American Educational Research Association	2
American Home Economics Association (AHEA)	2
American Society for Allied Health Professions	2
<hr/>	
American Association for Colleges of Teacher Education (AACTE)	1
American Academy of Nursing	1
American Association for Public Opinion Research	1
American Association of University Women	1
American Ceramic Society	1
American College of Mental Health Administration	1
American Council for Consumer Interests (ACCI)	1
American Craft Council	1
American Evaluation Association	1
American Historical Association	1
American Library Association	1
American Nurses Association	1
American Personnel and Guidance Association	1
American Public Health Association	1
Association for Consumer Research (ACR)	1
Association for Legal History	1
Association for Library and Information Science Education	1
Association of Administrators of Home Economics	1
Association of Institutions Research	1
Chi Eta Phi Sorority	1
Coalition for Black Development in Home Economics	1
College English Association	1
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority	1
Home Economics Education Association	1
Indiana Artist Craftsmen	1

Table IV-4. --Continued

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Institute of Medicine, National Academy of Sciences	1
Interdisciplinary Health Team Care National Interest Group	1
International Federation of Home Economics	1
Kappa Omicron Phi National Honor Society	1
Michigan Association for Colleges of Teacher Education (MACTE)	1
Michigan Council for the Humanities	1
Michigan Council of Family Relations	1
Michigan Home Economics Association	1
Michigan Nurses' Association	1
Midwest Modern Language Association	1
Midwest Nursing Research Society	1
Modern Language Association	1
NTL Institute	1
National Association of Vocational Home Economics Teachers	1
National Association of College Arts Administrators	1
National Black Nurses' Association	1
National Council of Family Relations	1
National Council of Home Economics Administrators	1
National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts	1
Omicron Nu National Honor Society	1
Organization of American Historians	1
Potter's Guild of Indiana	1
Renaissance Society of America	1
Shakespeare Association	1
Sigma Theta Tau, International Honor Society of Nursing	1
Society for Health and Human Values	1
Urban Affairs Association	1

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#### Learning Through Self-Directed Reading

Eight leaders recorded self-directed reading as an important learning resource. Eight leaders said that reading was a major way of gaining some conceptions of new issues in an organization, higher education, and leadership. Most of all, leaders felt that self-directed learning was critical. For instance, one leader, Dunn, described herself as a self-taught person. When they need to know about new tasks or issues on campus, they felt that the best way to acquire that information was reading books and materials in that area.

For instance, collective bargaining in higher education ... when the faculty there organized a union.... But we didn't know what we were doing so I read everything I could find about it.... And it is freer and less structured than going to a workshop or a course or whatever because I'm able to decide what I want from the books rather than their saying this is what you need to know.... But that's a personal preference ... I think that, other more gregarious administrators might prefer workshops where they could have the human interaction. I just prefer reading. (Warden)

Table IV-5 presents the recent reading materials of the female leaders outside their major field. As shown, the most popular periodicals the female leaders read are Change Magazine (10 leaders) and the Chronicle of Higher Education (9 leaders), Black Issues, and The Journal for Higher Education (6 leaders). Educational Record, Information Technology, New Directions in Higher Education, and Science Magazine were reported by 4 leaders. And Adult Education, Business Week, Harvard Business Review, National Issues in Higher Education, Non-Profit Management & Leadership, The Journal of Teacher Education, and The Journals from Educom were reported by 3 leaders. Also seven leaders reported that they read Newsweek and U.S. News and World Report regularly. One leader, Brown, reported that she receives two dozen newsletters and brochures, and another leader, Green, mentioned subscribing to a dozen journals and magazines a week.

Six leaders reported that they have read Megatrends, and five leaders reported that they have read Bennis (1985), Boyer (1981, 1987), Kanter (1977a), and Toffler (1980, 1990). Four leaders marked Organizational Behavior, and the Jossey-Bass

management series books. In addition, three leaders noted that they have read Administrator's Role in Improving Teaching on Campus, A Tenured Professor, Killing The Spirit, The Quest for Quality, Tenured Radicals, and Women's Ways of Knowing. During the second round, follow-up questions, two leaders, Kelly and Jones, commented that they have a long list of books (over 200 titles including those listed here) that they have read or are reading.

**Table IV-5 A List of Recent Readings**

<u>Periodicals</u> (The numbers represent the number of leaders that read the periodical regularly or sometimes.)	
Title	Number of Leaders
<u>The Change Magazine</u>	10
<u>The Chronicle of Higher Education</u>	9
<u>Newsweek</u>	7
<u>U.S. News and World Report</u>	7
<u>Black Issues</u>	6
<u>The Journal for Higher Education</u>	6
<u>Time</u>	5
<u>Educational Record</u>	4
<u>Information Technology</u>	4
<u>New Directions in Higher Education</u>	4
<u>Science Magazine</u>	4
<u>Adult Education</u>	3
<u>Business Week</u>	3
<u>Harvard Business Review</u>	3
<u>National Issues in Higher Education</u>	3
<u>Non-Profit Management &amp; Leadership</u>	3
<u>The Journal of Teacher Education</u>	3
<u>The Journals from Educom</u>	3
<u>The Wall Street Journal</u>	3
<u>Teacher Education Reports</u>	2
<u>American Demographics</u>	1
<u>Educational Report</u>	1
<u>New York Review of Books</u>	1
<u>Sports Illustrated</u>	1
<u>Newspapers</u> Detroit Free Press:2/ Detroit News:1/ Morning Sun-Local:1/New York Times:2/Ursh Post: 1	

**Table IV-5. --Continued**

<u>Books</u>	(The numbers represent the number of leaders that have read the book recently.)
Title	Number of Leaders
Megatrends 2000	6
Jossey Bass series	4
Organizational Behavior	4
Administrator's Role in Improving Teaching on Campus	3
Women's Ways of Knowing	3
A Tenured Professor	3
Tenured Radicals	3
The Quest for Quality	3
Killing The Spirit	3
Why Do Dogs Have Wet Noses?	2
Higher Education	2
Thriving on Chaos	2
Closing of the American Mind	1
Cooperate Culture	1
Cultural Literacy	1
Degrees of Fraud	1
Diploma Mills	1
Group Think	1
Leadership an Art	1
Learned Optimism	1
Maintaining Professional Competency	1
Managing the Academic Dept	1
Ordered to Care	1
Strategic Planning	1
Teachers for Our Nation's Schools	1
The Academic Dean: Dare Dragon and Diplomat	1
The Active Society	1
The Human Side of Enterprise	1
The Great Mother	1
The Negro American	1
The Younger Science	1
Tomorrow's Schools	1
Tomorrow's Teachers	1
Where Have All the Leaders Done?	1
Women and Success	1

\* Some leaders reported a number of authors' names.  
Following are frequently mentioned names by the  
leaders:

Bennis: 5/ Boyer: 5/ Kanter: 5/ Toffler: 5  
Sheldon: 4/ Adler: 3/ Drucker: 3/ Peters: 3  
Gilligan: 1

### Learning Through Life Itself

Fifth, female leaders found that life itself is an important learning source and five leaders identified seven instances. Personal life experiences, such as being raised as a girl, life itself, raising children, and family life, were identified as good learning sources. One leader said that she learned a lot by playing basketball and golf in groups of participants in the sport in which she was the only woman player. Another leader claimed that dealing with children and her husband was very good training for this kind of job. She commented that she has had her present job longer than any of her predecessors. She started her career after raising her small children. She emphasized that her experience at home was critical for her current position and said:

Raising children is marvelous training for dealing with people. Dealing with husbands is a marvelous way of learning how to deal with people and neighbors ... I'm the only one who has been married with children. There have been white males, and there have been women who were ... never married. And I think there's a message there. (Jones)

An other leader emphasized that her personal psychology is the major source of her unique leadership practice. She said her cooperative orientation is the result of her personality, which is derived from her psychological disposition.

I'm not sure where I learned that...I think it's perhaps a mix of my own psychological disposition ... I don't know, where this whole orientation ... which is more participative and collaborative comes from.... I think you have to analyze my entire personal life as well as my professional life.



(Powers)

Learning Through Graduate Training

Sixth, the other major source of learning leadership competencies is the study of each leader's own academic area. Six leaders reported that graduate training, course work, and research in their own academic areas were important learning sources for their profession. In general, graduate work was reported as helpful in gaining such intellectual-versatility competencies as analysis, synthesis, critical thinking, creativity, and leadership potential. They explained that their academic work was very helpful, offering each of them a unique perspective from which to understand their work as well as the chance to gain general analytical skills.

Most of the female leaders acknowledged that their academic major area of study helped a lot in building their competencies as leader and manager. One leader has a range of academic background in several different fields--a BA in English, in history, and in biology, and a Ph. D. in philosophy, because her religious group needed her to acquire proficiency in each of those areas at different times. She said the academic background is very helpful but that it was also very stressful during the time when she was working on her degrees:

It has made my life as an administrator easier because I'm not afraid to talk to arts and sciences folks. I'm not afraid to talk to engineers. I'm not afraid to talk to scientists. Because I at least have some sympathy for their disciplines.... I've had enough exposure to them and to those

disciplines to have some respect for them. So in terms of academic administration I think it's very helpful. (Powers)

One leader compared nursing to an administrative job, since nurses learn how to manage a number of tasks.

You have to be sensitive to the whims and wishes and needs and desires and demands of other people. And you have to develop the capacity to keep clear the boundary between self and another, so that you won't get pulled in too deeply into personally constraining kinds of relationships.... I think good nurses are good managers. (Dunn)

Lewis is an artist. She emphasizes creativity and harmony as the connections between her creative art and her work as a college administrator. When I interviewed her in her office, she explained her administrative philosophy by referring to a big, large, square-shaped ceramic work of hers which she had placed on the table in front of us.

Now see ... this is my art right here. This piece, the short one. You see how it's structured. See how it's organized. You see how there's a nice balance to it. There's sort of a harmony of the parts. And it has an original look to it. It doesn't look like something you've ever seen before ... I'm creative as an administrator .... And a lot of administration is about looking at what's going on, fact finding, fact gathering, listening, hearing, making some assessments and acting ... as an artist ... it only came about after I was resourceful and solved problems and figured out what to do and made assessments and did research. And so I learned that whole problem solving strategy as an artist. (Lewis)

### Connected and Integrated Learning Experiences

By examining the female leaders' learning resources, I found an interesting pattern in the process of learning: The leaders emphasized that learning occurred through a number of

connected experiences in their personal and professional life which were, at least partially, if not wholly, integrated; rather than through a series of easily identifiable, discrete experiences that were independent of each other. Since the leaders identified the importance of these distinctions, I am defining them clearly here and will refer to them subsequently as "connected, integrated learning experiences" as opposed to "separate, independent learning experiences." The leaders reported that they learned through both their personal and professional life.

Through my learning experiences. In many ways I think my personal life and my professional life are different, but they're also very integrated.... you know who I am before I walked into the office. What I learned as a person, I very much learned as a professional too. Sort of, that sort of integration. And I think a lot of my learning experiences come from the informal experiences of home, the culture that I grew up in ... there was a familial tie there and that was very important.  
(Powers)

Also, the leaders noted that they learned through connected learning experiences in their professional activities. For instance, self-directed reading is a good tool for learning. But reading alone does have problems, the leaders explained, since some interaction and feedback are necessary. They said that they needed feedback about what they were doing. One interviewee pointed out the problem of reading and emphasized the importance of interaction:

But I think the problem with them [reading] is the need for feedback and I'm considered very direct and that's what I am. So the trouble with written materials for me is that I need feedback. I need

verbal feedback. I need interactions with people and that's how I work. (Smith)

Sometimes management courses added to work experiences could have a timely learning effect on their daily work tasks. Most of the leaders mentioned that learning in a connected and integrated way (three or more methods) is the best, one which they preferred. One leader talked about her learning experience involving a number of people partly as a result of the management course she took a few weeks ago, and partly just because of her experience in certain areas.

The leaders in my study valued self-directed reading to learn new concepts, but realized that reading alone can not be an effective way of learning. Therefore, they said, they tried to learn through a variety of interactions with people, attending professional meetings, informal group meetings, and taking management courses as well as professional reading. This information indicates that these female leaders' learning experiences can not be separated clearly from their personal life experiences, such as meeting, talking, and interacting with other people. This issue will be discussed in Chapter V.

#### Learning Experiences: What They Learned

The first part of this section was about learning resources for leadership competencies: how did they learn? This section will now focus on the learning experiences they have had, as females, in their leadership positions; that is, what did they learn?

### Learning Experience From Current Position

The female leaders said that they learned a lot during the course of their present positions in terms of their personal and professional lives. To the question, "what did you learn during your tenure as an female administrator?" respondents reported 44 instances of learning experiences.

As illustrated in Table IV-6, the three areas of learning experiences are (1) organizational life, (2) interpersonal relations, and (3) personal awareness.

First, the most frequent learning experience was related to organizational life--they identified 17 instances out of 44. Nine leaders said that they learned the hierarchical organizational structure, how the organization works, how to negotiate, collective bargaining, working with unions, the slow pace of organizational change, the necessity of being serious, how to be a model to others, and how relationships change among colleagues after taking a new position.

Two leaders commented on their learning experiences when the relationship between them and other colleagues changed after they moved to central administration positions. They said that they needed to accept the authority connected with their new position and to act accordingly in such a hierarchical organization.

Some female leaders noted that higher education institutions are male-oriented organizations. Sullivan felt that since her academic major is organizational structure, she

**Table IV-6 Learning Experiences Through Leadership Position**

	Central Administrators	Academic Deans	Total
	Instances (People)		
<b>Learning Organizational Life</b>	<b>9(5)</b>	<b>8(4)</b>	<b>17(9)</b>
Hierarchical Org'l Structure	2	1	
How Organization Works	2		
How to Negotiate		1	
(Collective) Bargaining	1	1	
Working With Union		1	
Slow Change		2	
To Be Serious (to Position)	1		
Being a Model to Others	1		
Relationship Change	1		
Get Different Expectation		1	
Budget	1	1	
<b>Learning Interpersonal Relations</b>	<b>2(2)</b>	<b>13(6)</b>	<b>15(8)</b>
Human Relationship Skill		2	
Balance with Others		1	
Flexible		1	
Importance of Followers		1	
Know/Understand People	1	2	
Less Optimistic	1	1	
Involve More People		2	
Need of Listening		1	
Importance/the Other Side of the Story		1	
Be Active in Establishing Network		1	
<b>Learning About Self/Personal Awareness</b>	<b>6(3)</b>	<b>6(5)</b>	<b>12(8)</b>
Experience Stress (Child Care)	1		
Frustration	1	1	
Risk Taking	1	1	
Challenge		1	
Better Self Image	1		
Happiness from Helping Someone	1		
One Person Can Make Difference	1		
Life in Transition		1	
How Little I Knew		1	
Professional Life From Personality		1	
	<b>16(5)</b>	<b>27(8)</b>	<b>44(13)</b>

has a clear sense of organization. She said that she learned the importance of networking and commented on female leaders'

under-representation as follows:

Administration is a male dominated job. I think what becomes important then is networks, or these little working relationships.... I think men create an environment which is comfortable for them and men are more comfortable with other men ... people that they're comfortable with and they recruit them. (Sullivan)

During the second round, follow-up questions, Sullivan argued in support of her faculty-oriented professional values as follows:

I firmly believe that academic administrators should work to create an environment in which faculty can prosper. Faculty do the real work of a university. Administrators exist in order to facilitate faculty endeavors. Collegiality is the key to making universities successful, and attempts by administrators to impose their will on the faculty are doomed to failure. (Sullivan)

Nevertheless, she said that she learned that administration in higher education institutions is neither always academically oriented, nor is it always faculty oriented. She talked about her learning experience with misguided administration.

I think to some extent what my years in administration did was convince me how important faculty government is, and how often misguided, misinformed and down right incompetent higher education administration often is.... I think higher education wouldn't be a Ford Motor Company. (Sullivan)

Two other leaders talked about the lessons they learned about the difficulty of changing some organizations. They said they have learned that change takes a long time.

I think you get frustrated as well because as a woman in the organization you tend to fight a lot of battles over and over again. And you're surprised, I'm always surprised that you know if you look at the women's issues that have been

around for a long time and things are better in one set of dimensions. Yet you still encounter people who are fundamentally insensitive to the effect of behavior of words, attitudes on the quality of the climate for women. And you wonder why you've been beating your head against a wall. (Sheldon)

Second, 8 leaders identified learning about interpersonal relations in 15 instances. The leaders perceived that they learned how to adopt themselves to the pace of others to achieve a workable balance among colleagues or staff, to be more flexible, the importance of followers, a better understanding of people, the importance of involving more people, the necessity of listening, the importance of learning the other side of the story, and of being active in establishing networks. Most of the leaders said that they learned a lot about human relations, how to work with others, including faculty, executives, and clerical staffs. The following is an example of the response:

I've learned to trust my intuition, to trust what my gut feeling is about a problem or a situation or an individual. And even if everything does add up on the tally sheet and I still have some sense that there's some problems, I should probably listen to them because that intuition isn't just out of the clear blue sky. It's been developed over years of working with people. (Powers)

Third, 8 leaders reported 12 instances of learning about self awareness. Whereas some of them learned how little they knew, experienced stress and some other negative things, some other leaders experienced happiness as the result of helping others, the possibility of making a difference, and they felt some other positive feelings. Also the leaders learned the



meaning of risk taking and challenge. One leader, Powers, emphasized that she found that her professional life can never be separated from her personal life. She noted that her personal life and her professional life are different, but integrated. Dunn said that she recognized that her goals in life are never completely accomplished, since she wants to pursue new things at each step of her life. In her 60s she said she learned that life is continuously in transition.

So that critical issues, psychological/social issues, that were prominent in early years in ones life. You face them again. And I find that the same issues come up every decade. But I'm beginning to think a lot more about what I want to be when I grow up and how to get myself prepared to do that. I don't think that one needs necessarily to have one career for a lifetime. So I'm thinking about what I want to do next. (Dunn)

As a provost and academic vice president, one leader was the only female vice president at the university. She felt that she worked well with the males, but found that men have advantages for their professional development, since their research output, networking, and career paths are well prepared to move them up the ladder. So she learned that establishing networking and building trust are critical in professional development.

The other leader in her 60s said that she experienced stress from a child care problem, since there were no child care facilities when her child was small.

Well, I felt very stressed. Because at the time that my son was small, there were no child care centers. They were unheard of. It was thought that women should stay at home and look after their

children and most people did. And so I had a very difficult time arranging for his care. And so I didn't really begin teaching seriously until he was eight years old....I found it very difficult and it's much easier now. I think it's still hard but it's easier than it was. (Warden)

Each leader responded differently on questions about learning self awareness according to their positions, field of academic study, age, marital status, number of children, and so forth. For instance, a woman who married but had no children had different perceptions of raising children. Sheldon commented that having children might create a minor problem because of the time it would take to care for them, but she did not think that it would be a critical barrier in women's professional development, since any excuse (for absence from work or for having to reschedule professional appointments) relating to children in this country is accepted. Therefore, she did not judge her childlessness to be an enormous benefit in her profession. That was an interesting contrast with Warden, who had experienced stress because of inadequate childcare options in the past.

#### Learning Experience From Mentoring

From among the different ways of learning from people, leaders identified mentoring as a major source of learning and as critical for female leaders' professional development. Thirteen female leaders identified 39 mentors as seen in Table IV-7. Among the mentors, 16 were educators, college professors, or advisors in graduate school and 23 mentors were administrators and superiors in past and/or present position.

Twenty-nine were male and ten were female. The central administrators had 13 mentors in total, and only 2 mentors were female--11 were male. The mentors of the deans totaled 26, 18 of whom were male and 8 were female.

**Table IV-7 The Mentors of the Female Leaders**

The Mentors of the Central Administrators			
	Male Mentors	Female Mentors*	Total
Academic Advisor			
Professor	3	1	4
Administrator			
Superior	8	1	9
Sub Total	11	2	13
The Mentors of the Academic Deans			
Academic Advisor			
Professors	8	4	12
Educator			
Administrator			
Superior	10	4	14
Sub Total	18	8	26
Total	29	10	39

\* Nine respondents out of 13 noted that they did not have any female mentors.

What did the female leaders learn from the mentors? The mentors helped them in various ways: The female leaders reported 30 instances of such help.

From the female leaders' responses, I identified the following five ways of helping, as shown in Table IV-8: as

teachers, friends, facilitators, supporters, and as role models. Five leaders identified 13 instances of the way that their mentors helped them as teachers. They remembered that from their mentors they learned how to think, how to communicate, the pleasure of intellectual excitement, personal style, integrity, honesty, politics, and creative ideas. The leaders learned from their mentors by observing and working with their mentors. One leader said that she learned university politics from her mentor through many conversations.

He was very helpful in educating me about the university, how it worked, the politics of the university, university governments and encouraged me to get outside the department and do things.  
(Allen)

Another leader said that she learned honesty and integrity from her mentor.

I think I realized the importance of honesty and integrity. For sticking up for what is right even if it's hard to do so. I learned that sometimes you have to make hard decisions and that's just the way it is. (Kelly)

Four leaders identified 5 instances of the way their mentors helped them by facilitating growth and development, pushing, encouraging, and allowing them to make mistakes, as well as by helping them to discover their own talents:

[He] was the first person who suggested that I was good at this sort of stuff and I ought, that I could speak clearly and write clearly and I made sense and I was smart. He made me feel good and I realized I knew I was better at that than most people. (Lewis)

He had a wealth of knowledge about higher

education, lots of national and international contacts, and was at a stage of his career where he could afford for me to make mistakes ... to push me in terms of doing a variety of projects and also to push me to understand what I was learning about and doing in the course of interacting with various people at \_\_\_\_\_. (Allen)

Three leaders reported 4 instances of the way the mentors helped them as friends by sharing their experiences and believing in them. As Powers suggests:

I think they help you by providing opportunities for you to be reflective in the context of a hectic day. By sharing their own experiences.

Three other leaders reported that mentors helped them directly as supporters by developing their careers, facilitating their admission into an entry position, and helping them to move up the job ladder.

So when I finished my degree, he (mentor) offered me a job and I took it. (Sheldon)

They have hired me and have supported my work. Clearly, in academic work and in most fields of endeavor mere competence does not translate into success. Many competent people are not "discovered" or are not actively supported in their work. (Sullivan)

Two leaders reported that their mentors worked as role models for them. Powers and Kelly emphasized the importance of their mentors as role models, since these mentors influenced them enormously in their career. Powers learned a leadership style and how to handle human relations issues from a leader and the leader became an example that she has continued to look back on. Kelly described the way that her mentor was modeling all the things she wanted to do.

**Table IV-8 How Do Mentors Help?**

	Central Administrators	Academic Deans	Total(N)
	Instances (People)		
<b>As a Teacher</b>	<b>1(1)</b>	<b>12(4)</b>	<b>13(5)</b>
How to Communicate		1	
Integrity		1	
Honesty		1	
Assertiveness		1	
Aggressiveness		1	
Politics		1	
Gamesmanship		1	
Creative Ideas		1	
Intellectual Excitement		1	
How to Think		2	
Personal Style		1	
The Nature of Scholarly Life		1	
<b>As a Facilitator</b>	<b>2(2)</b>	<b>3(2)</b>	<b>5(4)</b>
Find My Talent		1	
Facilitating Growth & Development		1	
Push Me	1		
Afford to Make Mistakes	1		
Encouragement		1	
<b>As a Friend</b>	<b>3(2)</b>	<b>1(1)</b>	<b>4(3)</b>
Sharing Their Experience	1		
Believe in Me		1	
Reflective	1		
By Helping Him (the Mentor)		1	
<b>As a Supporter</b>	<b>3(3)</b>		<b>3(3)</b>
Career Development	1		
Facilitating Entry Position	1		
Help Move Up	1		
<b>As a Role Model</b>		<b>2(2)</b>	<b>2(2)</b>
Role Modeling		2	
	<b>10(5)</b>	<b>20(8)</b>	<b>30(13)</b>

Despite the fact that mentors of female leaders were critical to their professional development, some of the

leaders regret that they did not have enough mentors or did not have a mentor with whom they could share those kinds of indepth interactions reported by other leaders. Some women remarked that because academe is male dominated, there tend to be fewer mentors for females.

I've never had that sort of very focused direction. And maybe it was because I never had a mentor who helped me to think through what my capabilities were and to think through what the paths might be to lead me to a presidency and so forth ... when I went into a field it was primarily all male dominated. Philosophy is male, was at least in the past when I was going through it.... Most of my supervisors were male and some of them just didn't care to be mentors. They didn't know how to be mentors. Some of them didn't want to mentor me.  
(Powers)

I discovered two interesting issues: The first issue was that the respondents perceived that the ways in which their female mentors helped them were different from the ways that their male mentors helped them. The second thing was that they reported that the mentoring they received was influential in developing their subsequent relationship as mentors to others.

Four leaders who had both male and female mentors responded to questions about the difference between male and female mentors. One leader reported that male mentors are more career oriented, while female mentors are more relationship oriented:

I would clearly say that the mentors have been significant and the male mentors really give a very different kind of mentoring than female mentors.... And I think women are sympathetic to that in their mentoring. Whereas the men are more concerned in

mentoring in terms of next career steps, in terms of administration management, what you need to do for professional development. So the women are perhaps more sensitive towards some of the relationship and people issues. (Brown)

Another leader mentioned that male mentors were very helpful in terms of career development because they gave her feedback and direction as she was doing her job.

Most of the men I've worked with have given more specific ... either job related identities. Or they have been very helpful in helping me move up the career ladder....Now my female mentors... extremely helpful in my career building and networking within my professional field ... with the women it's been more specific as major professor, as collegial dean, as a long term colleague of woman who's usually been one step up the career ladder than I. Whereas with the men, it has been more situation specific to help better performance in the job or to help move up the career ladder. But both are very helpful. (Dunn)

During the second round, follow-up questions, about the way they received help from their female mentors, two leaders reported that women mentors were helpful in building a common interest and friendship as females.

They have provided a friendly, caring, and supportive environment in which to work. My ties with my mentors have moved from professional relations (mentor as teacher, mentor as dissertation co-chair, mentor as boss) to friendship/personal relations. This link between one's professional and personal and personal life may not be critical to one's success, but certainly one's life is much more pleasant and fulfilling when there is a kind of seamless web between the professional and the personal. (Sullivan)

In this study, I investigated questions about the mentors of the female leaders, but in the first interview, I did not ask questions about how they saw themselves in the role of



mentor, as care-giver. Only one leader mentioned her mentee relationship at the first interview. At the second round, follow-up questions, six leaders mentioned their mentee-mentor relationships:

As faculty member, mentored several students, i.e., counseled, taught, explained, directed. As senior faculty, mentored new faculty, i.e., advised, "opened doors," did joint projects. For example, I'd involve them in campus and community organs, I'd advise and support them in career moves. (Green)

I was the immediate supervisor and provided guidance regularly, not only on the job, but helped them grow and move up to their next level positions. We are still in touch regularly, though our locations are different. (Brown)

Three other leaders responded that they were skeptical about traditional mentoring and the role of mentors. Responses from the follow-up questions include the following:

I am skeptical about mentoring because of the possibly excessive dependency it implies. (Warden)

I have little interest in preparing someone "to follow in my footsteps." Just as my mentor encouraged me to develop broad sets of competencies and knowledge, I encourage that same approach to learning. I am, however, concerned about helping others find alternative strategies for advancing in professional paths of their own choice. My best mentoring may be in areas of helping people look at relationships or possible linkages, at determining what can be changed and what will remain constant. (Sheldon)

Interestingly, leaders who have had many mentors reported that they have developed similar mentee relationships--the kind of interactions, the number of mentees, and the role of mentors - -while those who did not have enough mentors in turn did not develop relationships with mentees. This indicates an

important issue in women's mentoring which will be discussed in more depth in Chapter V.

One leader distinguished between the career mentor and intellectual mentor:

They were intellectual mentors. They were not career mentors ... I think there's a distinction.... I learned how to think and I learned how to create ... ideas and I learned the intellectual excitement of sociology and I loved that.... It was exciting and wonderful but it was not career oriented. (Smith)

I realized the importance of recognizing the various definitions of mentoring among the interviewees. The career mentor needed to be supportive for career development as well as intellectual development. The female leaders emphasized that they need both mentors who would help with both career functions and psychosocial functions.

#### Learning Experience From Professional Activities

Female leaders in this study explained that their professional affiliations held significant meanings for them. Most of the female leaders reported that they are the members or board members of certain associations (see Table IV-4 in the earlier section) and that they participated in national and regional conferences and workshops regularly. Some female leaders emphasized that establishing a network more overtly would assist them in advancing in their career more quickly.

I asked "what are the benefits of participating in conferences or workshops?" The major function of professional activities through conferences/ workshops was networking and

social community, rather than learning new things. The female leaders said they have meaningful interactions at those meetings and during and after the conferences and workshops. Thirteen leaders reported the benefits of participating in conferences/workshops in 35 instances. After analyzing the responses, I developed three categories as shown in Table IV-9: (1) networking/social community, (2) continuing education/learning new things, and (3) maintaining a leadership role. The 13 leaders were positive about participating in professional organizations and the activities they have with those organizations. Eleven leaders reported the benefits of participating in conferences/workshops as networking and social community. They valued information sharing, talking to others, understanding each other, solidarity, sharing common interests and concerns, and being involved in interactions and receiving feedback.

One leader, Lewis, said that she liked to attend workshops, since it gave her a community to belong to. One example emphasizes networking functions:

You get a network of peers to talk to that you can share things with that you can't share at home. You get a sense that your problems aren't really in isolation so ... that what you're doing is being done by others and being shared by others. (Powers)

Some leaders expressed their sense of the value of the conferences in terms of informal interactions. One leader, Green, remarked that sometimes she was not interested in the official meeting and speeches on a specific topic. Instead,

**Table IV-9 Benefits of Participating in Conferences/Workshops**

	Central Administrators	Academic Deans	Total
	Instances (People)		
Networking/Social Community	4 (3)	12 (8)	16 (11)
Networking	1	3	
Information Sharing	1	2	
Support		1	
Social Community		1	
To Talk to Others	1	1	
Multi Cultural		1	
Getting Understanding of Each Other		1	
Solidarity/Common Interest		1	
Feedback		1	
Indirect Help	1		
Continuing Ed/Learning New Skills	3 (2)	9 (6)	12 (8)
Continuing Education		2	
Learning New Things		2	
Specific Skills (Budget,		1	
Group Dynamics/Behavior,		1	
Negotiation,	1		
Fund Raising/Public Relations)	1		
Broaden Intellect	1	1	
Get Ideas		1	
Enrichment Professionally		1	
Maintaining Leadership Role	4 (3)	3 (3)	7 (6)
Maintaining Leadership Role		1	
Contribution as Presenter, Panelist	1	1	
Seeking Adaptability	1		
Trying Out Ideas	1		
Reinforcement		1	
Time for Reflection	1		
	11 (5)	24 (8)	35 (13)

she liked to meet other colleagues and exchange information about their problems and difficulties as administrators who have similar interests and problems. She added that interpersonal communication at a conference is important and

that it is like the invisible college. Sometimes they found mentors at these events.

Some leaders valued the interactions among the members of women's associations. One leader emphasized the interaction among women as follows:

Some of them that are not directly related to my field, like the Association for Women in Development, and The American Association for Women, I've liked to interact with people from different disciplines a great deal. Because you learn a lot from people outside of your discipline.  
(Moore)

The second reported that the benefit of professional activities was learning new things. Eight leaders emphasized that they could learn some new things through conferences and workshops. They reported that they learned specific skills, interpersonal dynamics, ways of developing creativity, problem solving, negotiation, public relations, and budgeting skills through the workshops. One leader, Moore, emphasized the importance of continuous development of skills by attending the meetings to develop stronger skills, regardless of what level of skill development one currently has. Another leader suggested the importance of participating in conferences in terms of intensifying readings.

One of the advantages of going to national conferences and workshops is that you're meeting other people from other institutions who have similar jobs ... really heightens your awareness of the issues, the concerns, the possible solutions for them and I think intensifies the reading that you do. (Brown)

Six leaders reported the benefits of participating in

conferences/workshops as maintaining their leadership roles in the profession. By attending, they could compare what other universities were doing, understand some issue that related to the field, and adapt the new information to their own university to maintain and improve the quality of that university. They also stressed that conferences provided them with a time for reflection and an opportunity for trying out ideas. One leader commented on this issue, likening meetings to celebrating holidays, saying that attending meetings is, in a way, a festive periodic activity which serves as a reminder of the purposes and goals of her mission. She said that she likes to attend workshops and conferences even though the topics are not really stimulating:

It's the same reason one celebrates holidays every year, it reminds you. It reminds you of why you're there, why you're doing this, why do we have Thanksgiving every year.... Just about ways of getting people to think together or to work to a consensus, and just some little techniques. (Lewis)

In this section, I presented the learning experiences of female leaders in terms of how they learned and what they learned. I found that learning occurred through connected and integrated experiences in personal and professional life rather than through separate, independent learning experiences. That is, they learned through (1) networking including mentors, other leaders, colleagues, and friends; (2) work experiences; (3) participating in professional activities; (4) self-directed reading; (5) personal life; and (6) graduate training. They most frequently mentioned

learning experiences in a leadership position related to organizational life, interpersonal relations, and personal awareness.

As female leaders in male-dominated positions, what did they perceive as their unique characteristics? In the next section, I will analyze the social, cultural, and political advantages and disadvantages of being women which affect their professional development. I will also analyze their individual strengths and weaknesses to highlight the uniqueness of female leaders.

### Female Leaders' Uniqueness

#### Advantages of Being a Woman

By asking, "what are your unique advantages as a woman that helped your professional development?" I obtained 34 instances from the 13 leaders. These responses are categorized into five areas, as illustrated in Table IV-10.

The five areas are (1) benefits of women's life experience, (2) personal traits, (3) gender-specific experience, (4) being a pioneer, and (5) benefits of affirmative action. The following are the identified advantages.

First, 10 leaders reported **women's life experience** as an advantage for their leadership practice in terms of acquiring cooperative human relationship skills. Identified as women's life experience are married life which helps social skills,

**Table IV-10 Advantages of Being A Woman**

	Central Administrators	Academic Deans	Total(N)
	Instances (People)		
<b>Benefits of Women's Life Experience</b>	<b>6(5)</b>	<b>6(5)</b>	<b>12(10)</b>
Family Background(Stimulative)	2	1	
Single Life (No Family Chores)	1	2	
Supportive Husband	1	1	
Benefits of Married Life	1		
No Economic Burden	1		
Never Heard Herself Called "Dumb"			
Low Standard in Behaving Brilliant		1	
Having a non-competitive environment (No Sports)		1	
<b>Personal Traits</b>	<b>2(2)</b>	<b>5(4)</b>	<b>7(6)</b>
Supportive Personal Traits		2	
Preference of Group Work	1		
Help People Work Together		1	
Faculty Oriented	1		
Appear Confident		1	
Work Hard		1	
<b>Gender Specific Experience</b>	<b>5(3)</b>	<b>2(2)</b>	<b>7(5)</b>
Experience of Raising Children	1		
Dealing w/ Husband	1		
Girls' Unique Relationship	2	2	
Women's Different Ways of Knowing	1		
<b>Being A Pioneer</b>	<b>1(1)</b>	<b>4(2)</b>	<b>5(3)</b>
Pioneer		1	
Blazing the Trail for Other Women		1	
Freedom of Inventing Own Life		1	
Volunteer Work for Prof. Org.		1	
Participating in Women's Assoc.	1		
<b>Benefits of Affirmative Action</b>	<b>1(1)</b>	<b>2(2)</b>	<b>3(3)</b>
Affirmative Action	1	1	
Benefits of Filling a Slot		1	
	<b>15(5)</b>	<b>19(8)</b>	<b>34(13)</b>

having a supportive husband, having no economic burdens,



having a single life, and having a stimulating family environment.

One leader mentioned that she never heard that "girls were dumb" in her childhood. She believed, however, that people had a low standard of behavior for girls' intellectual development: When boys made certain mistakes, they were corrected but when girls made similar mistakes, they were not corrected, the assumption being that girls were not as capable as boys and could not be expected to perform to the higher standard one might reasonably expect of boys.

Oh, sure. I think that women, I used to say that the advantage used to be when I was younger that if I said something dumb, nobody noticed it. And if I said something halfway smart, people thought it was brilliant because I was a female. I spent many years working where there were almost all men. And there were lots of disadvantages.... I wasn't socialized to live the kind of life I'm now living. But I was part of that transitional generation.  
(Smith)

The female leaders frequently mentioned family life. All the married female leaders responded that their husbands were supportive, both emotionally and practically. They valued the idea of balance; that is, sharing child care responsibility and family chores between husband and wife, as well as achieving a balance between family life and professional life. One leader said that she and her husband chose her career as the primary career in the family rather than her husband's and she added the following comments on the advantage of having a supportive husband:

The women I know that have been successful in

administration and moved up the ladder, tend to have a supportive [spouse] or be single. And supportive spouse is, I think, far preferable because you've got two people to help and certainly one of my mentors told me when I first became a dean. That once you get to dean level, and above, the positions are almost two person positions because you have so many social obligations. (Brown)

I found contrasts, however, in the views of female leaders with different marital statuses. Married leaders emphasized the psychological importance of their husbands' support in terms of balancing their personal and professional lives. The single or divorced female leaders emphasized structural benefits--they explained that a single life which left them free from family chores, allowing more time for their profession, was an advantage for women. One woman described her home as her refuge: It is a nice, quiet, and peaceful environment because she has no children. Another leader said that her divorce was a turning point in her career, since it allowed her more opportunity to grow professionally. One single woman said her professional career was the first priority in her life, rather than any other things:

I think I've been able to move much faster not being married ... having a family and responsibilities. I think it's much more difficult to be able to move effectively and do the things you have to do in administration with families....Well, see my professional life has always been the most important thing for me. I did consider marriage several times but, a lot of times it was my professional career that interfered with what I wanted to do. (Moore)

Second, 7 leaders reported their **personal traits related to feminine characteristics** as advantages. The women leaders

responded that they were better at human relationship skills than male leaders. Most of them said that they have an advantage as a woman, particularly in dealing with staffs, since they act in a personally friendly manner that would be difficult for a male supervisor to adopt. One leader said as follows:

I guess the advantages are I think some of the feminine traits are valuable that we have ... our concern with others ... our concern for others, our noncompetitiveness, our nurturing abilities that ....the desire to see others succeed and to get pleasure from somebody else's success and [be] just kind of like a mother ... there's a lot of family metaphors I see. (Kelly)

Third, 5 leaders identified their **gender-specific socialization experiences** as their unique advantage. Those experiences are raising children, a daughter's unique relationship among family members, having a non-competitive environment, and women's different ways of knowing.

Related to girls' unique experience, two leaders talked about girls' unique relationships within the family. They said that, in family conversations, they did not have to compete intellectually as vigorously as the boys did. They did, however, have to make sure that when they spoke they first considered whether their brothers and parents wished to speak. The responsibility of the girls in these family conversations was to participate in the conversations cooperatively; that is, accommodating the desire of their brothers and parents to speak: They tried hard to get positive attention in a short time by presenting their intentions

clearly. In short, there was a hierarchy within the family that determined who had the right to speak first, second, and so on, as well as determining how long they could talk. Girls were at the bottom of this hierarchy, parents were at the top, and boys followed the parents, having priority over the girls in terms of family conversational speaking rights.

One leader described her experience as a daughter and her unique relationships within the family as follows:

When I was growing up, daughters had a particular place in the family and were treated in a particular way, and they learned certain coping skills. You learn to persuade instead of demand. You learn to listen instead [of] talking all the time. You learn to present your case quickly and clearly ... you learn to get along with people. I think in a family, like mine, where there is also a brother, those coping skills later are invaluable.... You know men and women do not deal with the world the same way. And I think part of it starts in childhood. (Jones)

Also, Jones emphasized that raising her children and dealing with her husband were marvelous training experiences in human relations skills.

When I got married, raising small children, again I think provides one with skills for dealing with the rest of the world. You learn how to diffuse irrationality, you learn how to give choices rather than orders. You learn how to, by teaching children social skills, how to get along with people you don't like. You learn something yourself. Dealing with husbands, and not only your own but in a social setting, as a family.... you apply some of those skills of persuasion. (Jones)

Gender-specific socialization experiences include women's different ways of knowing, along with family relations. One leader argued that there is legitimacy to the concept of

different ways of knowing. Sheldon emphasized that she has an advantage as a female leader, since she can see from a perspective of women's uniqueness in her ways of knowing. She said that having access to a new way of viewing the world gave her a special meaning as a woman.

At a keynote speech, on re-visioning knowledge and the curriculum through feminist perspectives, Sheldon addressed the contributions of women and minorities and supported different ways of knowing. She indicated that higher education has been slow in removing barriers to the academy and even slower to examine openly issues of inequities and discrimination in higher education institutions. She pointed out that Women's Studies is an important piece in the holistic approach to diversity. Also, she cited the report of the ACE Commission on Women in Higher Education. She explained that what has yet to happen on all our campuses is the transformation of knowledge and, therefore, of the curriculum demanded by this explosion of new information and by challenges to conventional ways of thinking and knowing.

Fourth, 3 leaders reported 5 instances of **being a pioneer** as their advantage. They saw that being a pioneer in their position made it possible to blaze the trail for other women, to invent one's own life, and that it also meant having the opportunity to do volunteer work for women's professional organizations, and participate in women's associations.

The three leaders described their work as blazing the

trail for other women, and being recognized specifically as a successful woman, not simply as a nongendered person in their position. They reported that participating in women's associations and exchanging information about women's issues were great advantages. For instance, one leader said she was interested in women's issues and active in women's associations within the university and outside the university. She had the advantage of exchanging information about new books to read on women's issues. Also she indicated that she is seeking opportunities to explore things like faculty and professional women's associations and to be involved in woman's issues.

[That] gives you access to understanding and observing some other ways of knowing and that greatly expands if you can use those effectively....I try to keep to up on some of the women's study issues; go to the women's studies conference. (Sheldon)

Fifth, in contrast to the psychological and cultural advantages, three other leaders identified affirmative action as a structural advantage. They thought that being a woman may help their administrative advancement. Two leaders, Sullivan and Allen, said that they were hired because of a value commitment of the person who hired them; that is, a value which said that senior administration should not consist only of white males.

When the president hired me, if there was equally qualified male candidates and me, he would have hired me because he's committed to having women and minorities in administrative positions so that could have been an advantage. (Allen)

The other leader, Brown, pointed out women's invisibility as a factor which may influence some organizations to hire more women. She explained the effect of affirmative action in terms of balancing and getting more women in certain kinds of positions.

#### Disadvantages of Being a Woman

By asking, "what are your unique disadvantages as a woman that hindered your professional development?" I obtained 31 instances from the 13 leaders. It is interesting that the number of instances of disadvantages is very close to the number (34) of instances of advantages. Based on their responses, I developed three categories as illustrated in Table IV-11: social bias, organizational cultural bias, and individual disadvantage. The instances under the category of social bias are related to a society-wide, public stereotypical view, whereas the instances under the category of organizational cultural bias are related to a institution-wide, organizational stereotypical view.

First, 8 leaders identified **social bias about females** as a serious disadvantage. Fourteen instances were reported including prejudice, bias, and stereotypical ideas of women. For instance, when the female leaders go to a new place and meet new people, they are uncomfortable since they perceive that most of the people have a bias against women leaders.

**Table IV-11 Disadvantages of Being a Woman**

	Central Administrators	Academic Deans	Total(N)
	Instances (People)		
<b>Social Bias</b>	<b>4 (3)</b>	<b>10 (5)</b>	<b>14 (8)</b>
Prejudice/Bias Against Women	3	3	
Stereotypical View		3	
Scrutinized		1	
Closed Job Market to Women	1		
Be Conscious/Emotional Expression		1	
Pressure/Try Hard (Big Burden)		2	
<b>Organizational Cultural Bias</b>	<b>6 (2)</b>	<b>5 (5)</b>	<b>11 (7)</b>
Men's Informal Conversation	1		
No Old-Boy Network	2	1	
Invisibility		1	
Underrepresentation	1	1	
Sexist Organization	1		
Lack of Support		1	
Female Dominated College		1	
Male-Dominated Culture	1		
<b>Individual Disadvantage</b>	<b>1 (1)</b>	<b>5 (4)</b>	<b>6 (5)</b>
No Career Mentor		2	
Unmarried Single Woman		1	
Physical Appearance		1	
Ethnic Minority		1	
Family chores	1		
	<b>11 (5)</b>	<b>20 (8)</b>	<b>31 (13)</b>

The leaders pointed out that there must be some long standing biases and prejudices against females. Kelly described a recent experience which reminded her that she is never free from the disadvantages of being perceived by others who have stereotypes about women.

There's the immediate assumption that, "Ah hah, that's their token woman." .... When people see you initially, they think, "Mmmm, she's their affirmative action quota gal." And I think that's still there. I think that's a disadvantage for us



because we really do have to, in every new situation, prove ourselves all over again.... And that's really a hinderance because that keeps you from just doing a good job, that added pressure. Disadvantages.... Well, I tell you, I thought I had conquered my feelings about being a woman administrator until this weekend ... there was a meeting of about fourteen college presidents and vice presidents and deans ... there were maybe sixty people and maybe two women.... I was very uncomfortable in that room. And this was a room of just middle aged, white, males. And I was supposed to lead one of the discussions groups. That was all males. And the room was set up with just rigid rows and chairs behind the rows.... I said, well let's just sit in a circle or change the chairs.... I heard one guy go, you know he swore and he said, "She'll want to take more time moving the furniture and we're not going to have any time to talk." .... I pretended I didn't hear him and proceeded to rearrange the room ... and we really did have a fairly ... we did get our job done....In that room at that time, my femaleness hindered what I had to do.... And so I feel that I was at a real disadvantage of being a woman, this weekend. (Kelly)

Except within such traditionally female-oriented areas as nursing and home economics, most female leaders in this study responded that they were conscious of others' response to their professional position within the organization. That brought some pressure to bear on their behavior. They felt that other people wondered how they handle the dual roles, family and professional, and whether they were just doing the work in their spare time. That kind of perception by others is clearly very gender-oriented and negative.

The major theme of the social bias that 8 women reported is related to the female's stereotypical domestic role. They said they found that others often discounted their opinion because those opinions were voiced by a women. Also, they

described that when other women said to them "we really hope you succeed," they felt very burdened. One leader described her experience which resulted from social bias against woman:

I've found that you have to be very assertive but you have to be assertive from a non-threatening perspective ... if you're assertive and they perceive it as aggression, then it can turn people off.... I think very often women have to work harder in the beginning to prove themselves. As a minority you have to work harder than being just a woman, and I think that those have been some of the disadvantages in terms of the male arenas that you have to function in. And making sure that your voice is heard, because too often I've been in groups and made suggestions and then a male will turn around and say the same thing you've said, and then people listen. (Moore)

Two leaders both agreed that women may have an advantage in being hired for a specific position, since there is a great need for women in certain places. But they also saw this as a serious disadvantage for them in accomplishing their tasks.

You know, we need a woman to fill the slot. Let's ask Sue if she'd like to sit on the board....I usually believe that it's not good for me to believe that. I tend to believe it's not me. It's something else.... I mean I'm always working against this terribly negative self image I had when I was young. It's probably why I appear overly confident. (Sheldon)

Second, along society-wide social bias, 7 leaders identified **organizational cultural bias within the institution** as a disadvantage. The responses represent women's concerns that they do not have an old boy network and can not participate in men's informal conversation. Also, male dominant organizational culture, female leaders' invisibility, a female dominant college, and sexist organizations were

identified as disadvantages for female leaders' professional development.

Three leaders said that organizations are man-made and male oriented. In this type of circumstance, the women leaders felt disadvantaged in terms of isolation from informal gatherings among male colleagues, whereas most of the time, the information shared in the informal setting is very important. Sometimes others reacted one way when a man made a mistake but if a woman made a similar mistake, others reacted more negatively than they had to the man. Sheldon pointed out a typical example of the kind of disadvantage she dealt with in her organization:

There are easy examples. You're in a meeting. And the meeting ends for whatever set of reasons and all the guys go to the bathroom. They continue to talk about the topic. Or they at that point share a set of information with each other that they were uncomfortable sharing in a group setting. And that's a very natural way that meetings break up. And there are, in a sense, side conversations that have relatively important information. Okay. I mean that's just a very simple example that no one thinks anything about. But nine times out of ten there's never, there's not an effort to repeat that information to the person who is not there by virtue of gender. (Sheldon)

She said that she felt frustrated because she could not do anything in that situation. Since women occupy a small percentage of administrative positions, there is no solution to this kind of problem, unless more female administrators get into top administrative positions. A lot of women expect that a woman in an administration position might solve women's issues in her position, but the reality is far from fulfilling

such expectations.

Three other leaders reported the disadvantage of being a female leader in terms of discrimination:

I think I've changed a little bit. I've become more conscious of discrimination. I've become more conscious of men who discriminate. I have become more conscious of the fact that I can discriminate against women, too. Because I have experienced discrimination by women. I've had, I've had a secretary tell me that they will not work for a woman. (Powers)

Third, 5 leaders said that they have had individual disadvantages as a woman and 8 instances were identified. These are physical appearance, ethnic minority, being unmarried or single, and having no career mentor.

For instance, Dunn wrote in her "Dilemmas of Black Females in Leadership" that people generally resist accepting black women who perform competently in formal, high-status positions. She pointed out in that article that when the black woman leader fails to give people what they believe they need, she is perceived to be deliberately depriving and rejecting, and therefore, hostile and potentially destructive. In the interview with her, she also emphasized her weakness from a perspective of physical appearance. Dunn sees her physical appearance as her critical disadvantage.

Because this is a very racist society. It is sexist. The fad is towards slim bodies, blond hair and blue eyes. And there's a tendency for people to have a distaste over those characteristics that they would not like in themselves. (Dunn)

Dunn feels some pressure to present a smiling face as a minority female leader.

People see me as a pleasant person and they always want to see me smiling. I think a part of it has to do with racial bias. Because they don't want to confront an angry black person so they want me always smiling. And there are times when I don't smile, so they get very concerned and I had to let them know that that's nothing to do with them. (Dunn)

From the perspective of having no family chores, the single or divorced female leaders were satisfied with their professional development, but some of them said that they felt that their personal life was unfulfilling. This theme tends to appear among divorced or widowed persons rather than among never-married-single persons.

Dunn has been divorced for 31 years and she especially saw her life as a transition in her 60s. She said that her job is not her whole life and she is at another decision point. She noted that she is thinking about how she wants to live--in the next few years and beyond.

Powers and Green are singles and never married. These single leaders talked about the disadvantages of remaining single, since marital partnership is needed at senior administrative positions. Green thought that she had not been selected to be a vice president, even though she was a finalist, since a single woman was not acceptable 12 years ago. These women were satisfied with their professional development, but they described being part of a married couple as being beneficial because of the partnership they have.

I'm sometimes envious of people who are in partnerships because there is the sharing. You know I have some friends who are husband and wife

who are both professionals and they have kids. They share the responsibilities of the kids and that's a burden - but they also share other things. Like who's going to cook. You know who's going to clean house. Who's going to go to the grocery shopping. But I always have to do the cooking and the grocery shopping for myself. Even if it's just for myself. And so that gets tiresome too. Sometimes I'm envious. (Powers)

### Personal Strengths as a Leader

The female leaders reported that as a leader they have personal strengths as well as having advantages as women. They talked longer on strengths than on advantages. The 13 leaders perceived personal strengths in 54 instances, whereas they reported 34 instances of advantage. Based on their responses to questions about personal strengths, I developed 3 categories as illustrated in Table IV-12. Those categories are (1) collaborative human skills, (2) being a self motivated worker, (3) and self confidence/capability.

First, 11 leaders described their personal strength in terms of their **human skills**. They identified 25 instances including listening to people; being a good observer; being sensitive; bringing balance to a group; caring about people; being collaborative and fair; accepting mistakes; and having good social skills, a sense of humor, professional ethics, and morals. These strengths resulted from their gender-specific experiences as female.

Second, 8 leaders described themselves as **self-motivated workers** and 18 instances were identified. These are being a risk taker, inquisitive, having intellectual horsepower,

**Table IV-12 Personal Strengths as a Leader**

	Central Administrators	Academic Deans	Total(N)
Instances (People)			
<b>Collaborative Human Skills</b>	<b>7(4)</b>	<b>18(7)</b>	<b>25(11)</b>
Listen to People		2	
Good Observer		1	
Being Sensitive		1	
Bring Balance to Group		1	
Caring About People	2	1	
Strong Interpersonal Skills	1	1	
Collaboration		1	
Social Skills		1	
Get People to Work Together		1	
Accept Mistakes		2	
Professional Ethics/Values	1	2	
Morals		1	
Sense of Humor		1	
Being Patient	1		
Fairness/Equity	2	2	
<b>Self Motivated Worker</b>	<b>7(3)</b>	<b>11(5)</b>	<b>18(8)</b>
Unique Work Experience		1	
Getting Things Done		1	
Work Fast		1	
Risk Taker/Challenge	2	2	
Being Ambitious	1		
Inquisitive/Love Finding Out	1	1	
Love to Bring Change		1	
Strong Interest in Career	1		
High Energy		1	
Enthusiasm		1	
Intellectual Horsepower	1		
Enjoying What I Do	1		
Love Problem Solving		1	
Successful Organizational Life		1	
<b>Self Confidence/Capability</b>	<b>5(3)</b>	<b>6(4)</b>	<b>11(7)</b>
Self-Confidence	2	2	
Optimistic/Positive	1	2	
Being Assertive		1	
Self-Indulgent		1	
Strong Analytical Skills	1		
Being Competent	1		
	<b>19(5)</b>	<b>35(8)</b>	<b>54(13)</b>

enjoying problem solving, enjoying what I do, feeling enthusiastic, having high energy, a strong interest in their career, enjoy making changes, being ambitious, working fast, getting things done, developing a successful organizational life, and having unique work experience. These are strengths that successful women in organization commonly have.

Third, 7 leaders reported **self confidence and capability** as their strengths including being optimistic, positive, assertive, self-indulgent, and having strong analytical skills.

The leaders described these three areas of personal strengths as influential factors in their professional development. Some of them are absolutely derived from their unique experience as females but the derivation of others can not be identified. But in this study, I hypothesized and confirmed that the characteristics of one person are closely related to her gender. One leader mentioned that she tried to be overly confident, since other people have a bias against women's confidence. In light of this realization, I could see that most of her strengths are related to her personal experience as female whether those strengths are "feminine" or not. As Marshall (1988) describes in her study, some of the strengths women adopt in the workplace are close to maleness: adopting male tactics, while some other leaders try to keep their femaleness. This will be further discussed in Chapter V.



Personal Weakness as a Leader

The female leaders in my study reported that they have personal weaknesses despite their strengths as leaders. Twelve leaders perceived personal weaknesses in 26 instances, whereas they reported 54 instances of their strengths. Based on their responses to questions about personal weaknesses, I developed 3 categories as illustrated in Table IV-13: (1) lack of public skills, (2) lack of effectiveness, and (3) personal/other weakness. Most of the information related to weakness was collected from the second round, follow-up questions, since some leaders mentioned their weakness as unique to women.

First, 6 leaders identified a **lack of public skills** in 13 instances, including the following: being impatient, feeling stage fright, difficulty moving easily in a crowd, difficulty remembering people's name, talking too much, not listening, not good at delivering public speeches, and lack of political skills.

One leader, Power, mentioned political skills in terms of fundraising. Another leader talked about her weakness in terms of political skills related to behavior in front of the public:

I wish that I had a better capacity to speak before large groups. I wish that I had more easy political skills in the sense of being able to relate easily to people to remember their names and be able to move easily in a crowd. A few things like that some people do very graciously and easily and that doesn't come naturally to me. I can do it but it doesn't come natural.... I think that an

administrator needs that ability to relate to people easily and rather superficially. (Warden)

**Table IV-13 Personal Weaknesses as a Leader**

	Central Administrators	Academic Deans	Total (N)
	Instances (People)		
Lack of Public Skills	8(3)	5(3)	13(6)
Being Impatient	1	3	
Stage Fright	2		
Lack of Political Skills	2		
Can't Move Easily in a Crowd	1		
Unable Remember to People's Names	1		
Talk Too Much		1	
Don't Listen		1	
Public Speech	1		
Lack of Effectiveness	4(2)	5(4)	9(6)
Have Failed To Be Task-Oriented		1	
Too Task Oriented		1	
Do Too Many Things at Once	1		
Take Too Long to Make Decisions		1	
Too Intense	1		
Counterproductive	1		
Miss The Larger Issue		1	
Haven't Been Innovative Enough		1	
Procrastinating in Delivering "Bad News"	1		
Personal/Other Weaknesses	1(1)	3(2)	4(3)
No Specialty	1		
Over Indulgent		1	
Physical Appearance		1	
Less Rewarding Personal Life		1	
Total	13(4)	13(8)	26(12)

Second, 6 leaders identified lack of effectiveness in 9 instances. These included having failed to be task-oriented, being too task-oriented, taking too long to make decisions,

being too intense, doing too many things at once, being counter productive, missing the larger issue, not being innovative enough, and procrastinating in delivering "bad news."

I found an interesting discrepancy between a leader's perception of herself and others' evaluation of her. Kelly often takes a long time in making a decision, since she believe she needs to do so. But others pointed that out as a weakness.

Sometimes I probably do take too long to make decisions. Somebody might say, "Well, she's taking too long." But rarely do you need to make decisions overnight, especially in an academic institution when things move so slowly.... I do spend time. (Kelly)

Third, 3 leaders identified **personal/other weaknesses** in 4 instances, including having no managerial specialty, being over-indulgent, poor physical appearance, having a less-than-rewarding personal life.

An unsatisfactory personal life can be a weakness: One leader said that she devoted herself to her professional life but lost a balance in her personal life. Lewis was widowed but remained single, since she thought that a woman's married life might interfere with her career. Now she describes her personal life as less rewarding compared to her professional life:

I think just as a person I've put an enormous energy into my professional life so that my personal life, my private life has not been as interesting or as rewarding as my public professional life.... So, I have a weakness but

it's just ... sort of the other side of spending a lot of time with your career that you don't have that kind of a private life. (Lewis)

In this section, I presented the uniqueness of female leaders' professional development. The female leaders reported the unique advantages they had as women in terms of life experiences, cooperative personal traits, girls' unique socialization experiences, being a pioneer, and affirmative action. In contrast, the disadvantages were reported as social bias against women, organizational cultural bias, and individual disadvantages. These advantages and disadvantages are structural features which are socially constructed about women as a gender group.

It is interesting that the female leaders perceived females' unique experience as an advantage in terms of collaborative interpersonal relations as opposed to competition. The collaborative nature of their leadership practice which was derived from females' unique socialization experience needs to be developed further in a separate section. In the next section, women's uniqueness will be highlighted based on their responses to questions about their strengths.

#### Uniqueness of Being Women

The female leaders perceived that they have unique characteristics in the way they do business, analyze problems, work as a group, make decisions, and plan. The following are

examples of the ways women do business differently from the way men do. Three leaders emphasized a unique attitude of women.

I see some of that way of doing business with the focus on hierarchy ... run over another to get ahead and one person getting ahead by blaming somebody else. I see that as a very male kind of way of doing business. (Sullivan)

I think women analyze problems different than men do. When we analyze problems, we take into consideration the human element more than men do.... I think we're probably much more conscious of feelings, how people are going to react and feel about something. (Allen)

They do succeed better, I think, if they don't try to be a man. You gotta be tough, but not nasty tough about it, ya' know, quietly tough, femininely tough, I guess is the word. (Smith)

The other leader, Moore had worked with both male and female groups and she talked about the differences between the way males conduct their business as compared to the way females do theirs. She described the tendency of males to get to business very quickly and mentioned that they move through things much quicker than some of the female groups with which she had worked. She said that a lot of times many decisions in male groups have been made before they come to the table, since they have their informal networks and a lot of the decisions are close to being finalized when they come to the table, whereas female groups operate differently:

A lot of the decisions have not been made and we'd like to get a lot of consensus.... I think females are probably much more concerned about being fair ... I think men are more focused on the end product ... An ethical caring. And I think we're more concerned about hurting each others' feelings in a

group because I've been in all male groups and sometimes I'd listen to what they say to each other and it's hard and cold and nobody cares and they just move on ... it may bother females, it does not bother males because they're accustomed to operating like that. (Moore)

Five leaders strongly claimed that women can be appropriate leaders in academe. Kelly emphasized that women will be appropriate leaders during the 1990s. She wrote in a paper that females are considered more collaborative rather than competitive, and she implies that "our natural styles of collaboration, accommodation, and compromise are going to be essential as we lead and manage organizations of professionals." She wrote that the work environment has changed so dramatically that more feminine qualities are needed to lead. She also suggested that, since the student body is becoming more diverse by age and race, there is a need for less authoritarian uses of power, more highly effective team work, and increased interpersonal effectiveness. During the interview, she also characterized her uniqueness as a leader as being cooperative.

Well, what I try to do is help people work together. I stress cooperation rather than competition. I work very hard with all the department chairs as a group. We are in this together. (Kelly)

For instance, in using money, Kelly emphasizes a group allocation procedure rather than simply designating the amounts herself.

And with our merger resources, we tried to support people whether the support is just providing release time so they can go back to school, reduced

loans. There's a computer ... one of the things that we did as a group, we decided to do a local area network. We pooled all our money. All the departments pooled their money and over a three year period, we put a micro computer on everybody's desk and then we networked it. That's one example of rather than just giving everybody money to spend on what they wanted to do.... I think everybody's been fairly happy with. (Kelly)

Five leaders, like Kelly, emphasized the importance of caring about people, seeking consensus, and operating in a cooperative instead of top down hierarchical manner and they find that cooperation is more effective. They said they are participatory, democratic, nurturant, and collaborative. One leader emphasized her great reserves of patience, both with people and with a lot of paper work details. An other leader stressed the point that her uniqueness came from her background--a noncompetitive environment.

I do think that since I was not raised in an environment in which I was thrown into competitive sports.... That I do believe in collaboration. That I do believe that more than one head is better than one. (Powers)

Two of the leaders strongly emphasized the fact that they have unique strengths as good listeners. One leader said her listening skills and ability to embrace diverse opinions came from her earlier experiences in which she felt resentment because someone had not listened to her when she needed them to. Another leader described her unique ability to listen as follows:

I listen very careful to people and I observe, very often, more than I talk until I determine that it's important for me to talk. And because I observe I think I pick up a lot of things in groups that many

people do not pick up. Because I'm listening and observing.... And I think I bring a lot of balance to groups because I listen and try to feed back some of the information that has been said. (Moore)

The female leaders' professional values make it possible for them to understand how they work within their leadership positions. I did not ask about professional values at the first interview, but one leader mentioned one of her professional values and it seemed an interesting line to pursue with the other leaders. Therefore, I added this issue during the follow-up questions. I found that they valued honesty, trust, integrity, harmony, academic quality, relationships, vision, the willingness to learn, openness, and fairness. At the second round (follow-up questions), the 10 female leaders reported their professional values as follows: (1) six leaders reported honesty/trust and integrity as among their professional values; (2) three leaders mentioned harmony, fairness, high academic quality and standards, and contribution to work for the common good/the willingness to help others; (3) two leaders each placed a heavy emphasis on the intangibles of vision, values, and relationships; the responsibility to develop oneself to the fullest; willingness to learn; openness; perseverance/ tenacity; and (5) each of the qualities listed below were reported by one leader: decisiveness, hard work, the ability to keep goals in mind at all times, competence, courage, efficiency, empathy, flexibility, poise, sense of humor, and fun.



Summary

In this chapter, I presented the 13 female leaders' leadership competencies, learning experiences, and their unique characteristics as women as well as demographic information. I found that the prominent theme of the female leaders' professional development is people-related competencies.

The leaders needed competencies as leaders and as managers. Among the competencies, leaders reported people-related competencies as critical for leadership positions. The female leaders learned from male and female mentors and they perceived the nature of that help from different perspectives: that is, whether the help served career functions or psychosocial functions. Also, the mentoring which the female leaders received influenced them to build a new mentor-mentee relationship, with themselves now in the role of being a mentor. Regarding their leadership positions, they reported that it was important to learn organizational-life and human-relation skills.

The data analysis shows the unique qualities of female leaders in terms of networking, mentoring, and working with people--leadership styles relying on collaboration rather than competition. Major issues will be discussed further in Chapter V, and conclusions and implications for further study will be presented. Also my own learning experiences from this study will be described in the reflection section of Chapter V.

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND REFLECTIONS

#### Introduction

This study explored self-perceived female leaders' learning experiences in their professional development by examining (1) leadership competencies, (2) learning resources and learning experiences, and (3) the uniqueness of female leaders. To explore these issues, I used two methods: open-ended interview and document-analysis. The participants in this study were 13 female administrators in Michigan higher education institutions in one of the following positions: associate provost, executive assistant to the president, or academic dean.

As Chapter IV indicates, the major competencies the female leaders needed for their professional development were identified in two categories: competencies as leader and competencies as manager. They learned those competencies through networking, working experiences, participating in conferences/workshops, self-directed reading, personal life experiences, and graduate training. Some of the female leaders in this study reported gender-specific experiences as an advantage of being a women leader and noted that human relationship skills and cooperativeness were derived from

their unique experiences as females.

Some of the findings were supported by previous studies but some other findings differ from the previous research studies that I refer to in literature review. In this chapter, I will discuss the findings from various perspectives, and will conclude my study based on the findings and the discussion.

### Discussion

In this section, I will discuss the uniqueness of female academic leaders from three perspectives: (1) differences between leaders in business and leaders in education; (2) differences between men and women leaders in academe in mentoring, networking, and working with people-collaboration/competition; and (3) differences among female academic leaders according to their role and exposure to women's studies.

First, my data suggest that academic leaders learn their needed competencies in a way that is different from the way in which business leaders learn theirs. When investigating the resources for learning their needed competencies, I found that the academic female leaders in this study reported 58 instances of learning resources for their professional development. From these responses, 6 categories were developed including networking, working experiences, participating in conferences/workshops, self-directed reading, personal life, and graduate training. A study of community

college presidents (Dotterer, 1989) described three broad areas of experiences affecting professional development. Dotterer interviewed 10 males and 2 females and claimed that personal life, on-the-job training, and formal training are the experiences affecting academic leaders' professional development. Whereas Dotterer's 3 categories were chosen before interviewing the subjects, the 6 categories in my study were developed on the basis of the interviewees' responses to the interviews. The prominent difference of my study from others is that the majority of the female respondents reported that self-directed reading was an important resource of learning. Although we can not directly compare the results of other studies with mine, since the conceptual framework and the research method were different in each study, there are, nevertheless some key features which can be compared. For instance, McCauley (1986) identified four resources of leadership development in business: job assignments, other people, hardships, and formal training. Contrasted to McCauley's business leaders, the female leaders in my study found personal life and professional activities (such as reading, graduate training, and participating in conferences/workshops) to be important learning resources.

I found one interesting commonality in observing women leaders in education and business. The socially-constructed disadvantages of the female academic leaders were identified as social bias against women. In this perspective, some

leaders described affirmative action as an influential factor of social bias--by forming an image of "a token woman"--even though it was perceived as an advantage in career advancement for some other women. Most of the leaders perceived the burden to be the necessity of having to prove themselves as competent in each new place and to new people. Kanter (1976) used the term "token" to describe female executives in business. In my study, some leaders reported the "token" image as a disadvantage. This result supports Kanter's (1976) study on corporate men and women. The hierarchy of job structures in which men tend to occupy higher positions in the hierarchy and women tend to occupy the lower positions is about the same in both academe and business, while the ways that the leaders learn are different in each sector.

As I reviewed in Chapter II, several research studies indicated gender difference in leadership styles. Additionally, I discovered some important characteristics from the participants of my study that were barely touched on in previous studies: women's networking, mentoring, and working in collaboration rather than competition. In discussing women's uniqueness; networking, mentoring, and collaborative human relations will be focused on in this section.

Compared to male leaders who have access to the "old boy network," the women in my study feel disadvantaged because they do not have a comparable network. Women leaders in this study experienced the disadvantage of having no old boy

network, being excluded from men's business-related informal conversation by virtue of their gender, few chances to have mentors, and invisibility. They described the hierarchical structure of higher education institutions as male-dominated. But, as some leaders claimed, "new girl network"--women's support groups and informal meetings--could be considered as a different way of women networking. The situation of female leaders have changed in the past 10-20 years. New features in the women's movement, in higher education, and in the organizations in Michigan in 1990s might have influenced women academic leaders' professional development.

DeWine (1983) distinguishes support groups from professional networking. He sees networking as a process of linking people to each other as career resources. According to DeWine, men's networking occurs more often as a by-product of membership in social clubs and participation in athletic events, while women's informal networking is different from that of their counterparts--women preferred personal psychological ties, getting together, and sharing their experiences through informal meetings rather than professional networking. In my study, a leader described her informal meeting with other women as a "new girls network." Through informal meetings, the female leaders help one another cope with some psychological or physiological problems or meet because they share some common experience. This might support a female's career only indirectly. In this perspective,

female leaders' networking is different from the existing conception of professional networking in terms of DeWine's definition. Investigating women's responses to questions about networking, I found that female leaders' networking was close to the function of a support group. It might, however, be a factor of the unique, informal type of networking that characterizes women's associations with each other.

Also, the female leaders in my study expected their interactions with male mentors to be different from their interactions with female mentors. The mentors of the female leaders included more males than females. They described that the female mentors were more sympathetic to equity issues and assumed the role of friend/supporter while the male mentors were more teacher/supporters who focused on situational help and were career oriented.

Regarding the role of mentors, Kram (1985) identified two primary types of functions of mentoring relationships: career functions and psychosocial functions. The leaders in my study reported that they needed mentoring from both career and psychosocial perspectives. As Kram suggested, the role of career mentor includes sponsorship, coaching, and providing the mentee with challenging assignments. Female mentors in this study were reported as serving psychosocial functions rather than career functions. It is interesting that the female leaders expect mentor-relationships to be different with male and female mentors.

Also, differences were found among the female leaders' relationships with the people who were their mentees: they tended to mentor others in the same way they had been mentored. At the first interview, for instance, some leaders who reported having several mentors also described their active mentee-relationships in ways that were similar to the kind of relationships they had had with their own mentors during the follow-up questions. This result supports Levinson (1978) who showed that those who have had mentors are more likely to be mentors. Additionally, my study shows that the kind of interactions in mentor-relationship might be enacted in a similar way they received.

Another prominent difference between men and women is the way of working with people. Emphasizing collaboration rather than competition in people skills was a main theme in the female leaders' leadership practice in my study. A contrast was found in my study from Powell (1989) and Hennig and Jardim (1977) who argued that men are better prepared to be managers because of factors such as their greater participation in team sports during their formative years. All but one of the participants of my study reported that they were not raised in environments of competitive sports. It is interesting that they saw the sports world as competing to win or lose rather than to collaborate. They saw cooperative human skills as a major strength they had as female leaders and as central to leadership. Loden (1985) reported that male managers



preferred resolving conflicts by competition and, in contrast, female managers preferred collaboration and accommodation. This theme clearly emerged through my study. Also, my study results support Marshall's (1984) study of woman managers in business.

Marshall reported that women demonstrated softer techniques in personal relationships and sympathy for others' needs, particularly those of subordinates. Instead, the major weakness of female leaders was found to be a lack of public skills-public speech, political skills, and ability to moving around among the public naturally. During the second round, follow-up questions, some leaders in my study reported again that they have difficulty in developing skills in this area. Pilota (1983) pointed out difficulty in women's general interpersonal communication with staff or supervisors within an organization. But in my study of academic leaders, interpersonal communication skills turned out to be one of their advantages. The major perceived strength of these women leaders was human skills, and they related their unique experiences as women as being positively related to their people-related skills. No one mentioned any difficulty in interpersonal communication; rather they said the kind of skills in which they do have difficulty is public speeches and political behavior and skills. Among some female leaders, tasks related to political and public matters (with the accompanying kind of bureaucratic behavior and bureaucratic

writing) were pointed out as being less pleasant.

Women's gender-specific socialization process, such as girls' unique relationships within the family and community, their experience of raising children, dealing with husbands, and women's ways of knowing were found to be unique advantages of the female leaders, since those experiences were very helpful in developing people skills. The leaders in my study reported that they valued trust, harmony, relationships, and collaboration. These unique advantages found in this study support the studies of Gilligan (1982) and Lyons (1983), who claimed gender-related differences in moral development. Also the uniqueness of women's ways of knowing is supported by the study of Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule (1986) which argued, as a result of their study through the interview method, that women have different ways of knowing. From a psychological perspective, Miller's (1976, 1986) arguments are supported by the information concerning female leadership strength in this study. She argues that women identify harmony and interdependence between persons as important.

Yet differences were found among the female academic leaders in this study as well as between men and women leaders. According to the role of academic leaders, different learning experiences were reported. Among the academic leaders, the competencies academic deans perceived themselves as needing were mostly learned through networking with other people such as mentors, colleagues, other leaders, and

friends. In contrast, central administrators perceived their major learning resource to be graduate training. This was an interesting difference related to their perceived critical competencies. Differences also exist between what central administrators and deans perceived as their critically needed competencies. The central administrators perceived intellectual versatility as the major competency they needed, while the deans perceived that people-related competencies were most critical to their positions.

It is interesting when we consider not only what they learned but how they learned throughout their professional development. When some leaders emphasized intellectual versatility, such as analytical, critical thinking, and creativity, they stressed graduate training as their major learning resource. Some other leaders identified people-related skills, such as team building and negotiating skills, as the major competencies they needed, and those leaders stressed learning from people through networking.

These differences between the central administrators and academic deans seem to be a reflection of their particular roles and responsibilities. One leader reported that the competencies vary slightly as she change her positions within the academic sector-chair person, dean, and provost. Brown described her role change in the follow-up responses as follows:

A dean [is] responsible for departments, centers and personnel within the college, whereas a provost

must be knowledgeable about all academic programs and budget/personnel campus-wide. By sheer increase in areas and people for which you are responsible, a provost must become more of a macro-manager/leader relying on deans and provost staff for accurate information. (Brown)

Among the female leaders that I interviewed, an interesting pattern was found in female leaders' perceptions of women's professional development. Shakeshaft (1989) suggested 6 stages for research concerning women leaders. As mentioned earlier, my study focused on the fourth stage which explores women leaders' experience in their own terms. In this stage, the main question is "How do women describe their experiences and lives?" By interviewing academic female leaders, I found that the women leaders fell into 3 groups in terms of how they perceive females' unique qualities for their professional development: (1) rejecting gender difference, (2) observing gender difference and bias, and (3) claiming female uniqueness as an advantage. The third type of leaders were reported as having read at least one women's studies book, while the others had not read any books from the women's studies sources that were mentioned in this study.

First, 3 leaders, Brown, Dunn, and Green, all of whom strongly emphasized their competencies from a perspective of being equally competent with men, reported that they had not read the women's studies mentioned above. Each saw herself as a competent individual rather than simply as a female. I will call them leaders who "reject gender difference" in terms of a male-standard perspective, since the three leaders did not

see differences as the product of being members of a particular gender group but as the result of individual differences. They believe individual competency and effort were the strongest factors for their success.

You have more women coming into leadership roles but they're still a minority... I don't think it's over discrimination. I've never really felt that.... Men have had different career tracks and different kinds of mentoring. The number of women who don't consciously go out and network and have mentors work with them were not as prepared to move up the ladder. And it takes planning. You don't just fall into administration in most situations.... And there's no question that men are more expected to do that than women. Women have to consciously develop their skills. (Brown)

A second approach observes gender difference. Five other leaders--Allen, Lewis, Moore, Sullivan and Warden,--reported that they observed differences in men and women in their own personal or work experiences, in their ways of doing business, group work, and their styles. That is, they believe there are differences between the two gender groups. They emphasized that they experienced the differences between men and women but did not judge the differences from a perspective of individual competencies. Instead, they described external factors as influential, factors such as women's unique responsibilities, male-dominated organizational culture, and unequal opportunities. I will call them leaders who "observe gender difference" from a liberal perspective. They argue that women have disadvantages, and that because of these disadvantages women need support at a societal level.

Administration is a male dominated job.... I think

men create an environment which is comfortable for them and men are more comfortable with other men... people that they're comfortable with and they recruit them. (Sullivan)

The leaders who have this perspective believe that women are underrepresented in the kinds of positions they hold, seeing such underrepresentation as the result of the male domination of the field rather than the result of women's incompetence.

The third and final type is what I describe as leaders who "claim female-uniqueness as an advantage" from a gender-sensitive perspective. Five other leaders--Jones, Kelly, Sheldon, Smith, and Powers--strongly claimed that their unique experience as females was to their advantage and they highly valued these experiences.

Some of the feminine traits are valuable ... our concern for others, our non-competitiveness, our nurturing abilities ... the desire to see others succeed and to get pleasure from somebody else's success and [be] just kind of like a mother.... A lot of the skills are related to being female, that there are a lot of traits that are traditionally described as feminine that are not seen as, that haven't been seen in the traditional sense as being critical to be a good administrator are now being seen as more critical for being a good administrator. (Kelly)

The leaders from this perspective reported they read women's studies materials (at least one or more pieces). Among them, one leader, who responded that the experiences of raising children and dealing with her husband were a marvelous benefit in her position, said that she did not read any specific women's studies books. But her reading checklist which I sent for the second round of follow-up questions indicated that she

had read at least one: Belenky et al.'s Women's Ways of Knowing. Responses to the reading checklist I sent during the second round of follow-up questions suggest that exposure to women's reading may be related to the leaders' ways of responding about issues concerning women's leadership style and their uniqueness.

The first type of leader can be designated as the leader who is trying to be one of the men. They value fair competition among men and women and emphasize individual qualifications in one's research, teaching, and career preparation. The second type of leader criticizes unfair competition between genders, since the current organizational culture is male dominated. They argue for equal opportunity between genders. The third type saw their work from a different perspective using a different conceptual framework --a gender sensitive perspective. The three types of leaders look at the same phenomenon but explain it differently. For instance, when talking about an issue related to a female leader's work with groups, if one judges it from a "rejecting gender-difference" perspective, he/she will say that the woman is too slow in decision making and takes too much time and energy, and so is thus less effective. But if one sees the same issue from a "claiming female-uniqueness as an advantage" perspective, he/she will say that the woman is emphasizing group participation, working together, involving more people, and concerned about hurting other people. These kinds of

contrasting statements about the same issues were seen in the responses of the participants of my study. It was very interesting to see the differences in the responses of the rejecting gender-difference type and the responses of the claiming female-uniqueness as an advantage type. But more indepth investigation should be conducted regarding why they responded differently.

Some female leaders in my study noted that they learn in a connected and integrated way through a combination of events in their personal and professional lives rather than in separate and independent events. This result supports Belenky et. al.'s (1986) conception of "connected knowing." In general, the descriptions of the ways they learned were similar for women in all three groups. The women in the third group (claiming female uniqueness as an advantage), however, used specific language that they had learned from reading women's studies resources. In contrast, although the women in the second group did describe similar ways of learning, they did not use the kind of language that their colleagues did who had been exposed to women's studies. This indicates that the exposure to women's studies is an factor influencing female leaders' perceptions.

In the next section, conclusions will be presented based on the findings and discussions of this study.

### Conclusions



1. The major competencies the female leaders needed for their professional development in higher education institutions were identified falling into two categories: competencies as a leader and competencies as a manager.

2. People-related competencies were seen as the most critical competencies for the female leaders. These leaders perceived that they have unique strengths in people skills in terms of cooperativeness rather than competitiveness. Differences were found between central administrators and deans in their perceived critical competencies. The central administrators perceived intellectual versatility as the major competency they needed while the deans perceived that people-related competencies were most critical.

3. I found that learning occurred in a connected and integrated way through a combination of events in their personal and professional lives rather than in separate and independent events. However, several major learning resources were identified as important. The competencies the academic deans needed were mostly learned through networking, that is, through contacts with other people such as mentors, colleague, and friends. The central administrators perceived their major learning resource as graduate training. The second important learning resource was identified as work experience (for both central administrators and deans).

4. Self-directed professional activities were critical in attaining needed competencies as follows: (1) participating

in conferences and workshops was critical in establishing networks, (2) self-directed reading was a major way of gaining new concepts, and (3) graduate training contributed to gaining analytical and critical-thinking capacities.

5. Despite the fact that leaders learned through self-directed professional activities, such as participating in conferences/workshops, reading, and graduate training, only a few female leaders (4 out of 13) perceived self-directed learning skills as an important competency for being a leader.

6. The mentors of the female leaders included more males and the female leaders perceived that their male mentors were different in the way they interacted with them from the way their female mentors interacted with them. In this study, four women reported that their female mentors were more sympathetic to the issue of equity and assumed the role of friend/supporter fulfilling psychosocial needs, while their male mentors were more teacher/supporters who were focused on situational help, fulfilling career-oriented needs. Also, the mentorships they had received in the past influenced their subsequent relationship as mentors.

7. Women's gender-specific experiences, such as girls' unique relationships within the family and community, their experiences of raising children, dealing with husbands, and women's ways of knowing were found to be unique advantages for many of the female leaders, since those experiences were very helpful in developing people skills. Emphasizing

collaboration rather than competition in people skills was a main theme in these women's leadership practice and it was found to be the female leaders' major strength.

8. The socially-constructed disadvantages of the female leaders were identified as the social biases against women. In this perspective, affirmative action was considered by some leaders to influence social bias in that it made it possible for people to form an image of "a token woman," while some other leaders perceived it as an advantage. Most of the leaders perceived that they had the burden of having to prove themselves as being competent in each new place and to new people.

9. A different way of looking at women's networking was identified by some female leaders. They valued informal meetings and support groups rather than any other professional networking.

10. The female leaders' personal weaknesses as leaders were found to be a lack of public skills and political skills. They perceived that they needed to develop skills in these areas. The next weakness was related to effectiveness: They perceived that they were less effective when they were too intense and took too long to make decisions, and also when they were too task-oriented or too people-oriented in their leadership practice.

11. I found differences in the leaders' perceptions of the uniqueness of female leaders' professional development.

The exposure to women's studies was posited as one factor for the different perceptions. Three types of female leaders were identified in viewing female uniqueness: (1) rejecting gender-difference; (2) observing gender-difference; and (3) claiming female-uniqueness as an advantage.

### Implications for Future Study

The research studies on leadership indicates leadership differences among male and female leaders in general. My study showed differences in learning experiences between the leaders in business and academe. It suggested gender differences in terms of ways of networking, mentoring, and working with people. Also, my study explored differences among the academic female leaders on their perceptions of female uniqueness. In this section, implications for future studies will be presented related to the conclusions of my study.

1. The leaders in my study responded in different ways to the uniqueness of being female leaders, depending on their administrative roles, major academic area, exposure to reading materials, and their marital status. Reading women's studies was found to be one of the influential factors concerning their perceptions of female uniqueness. But some other sources such as friends, colleagues, other professional activities, formal educational background, co-ed or non co-ed college education, and personal life might be interesting

variables to pursue for further research on this topic. For instance, two leaders who emphasized the importance of exerting their own effort strongly rejected gender as an important factor in their professional success. These two leaders said that they have perceived few advantages because of being a women in their positions. They thought invisibility of women in administration is a matter of individual ability rather than the result of a male-dominant organizational structure. In contrast, Sullivan and some other leaders emphasized women's underrepresentation from a perspective of male dominance of organizational culture. It was interesting to compare the arguments of Brown and Sullivan from my study. Their major academic study areas were different and their administrative positions were different. Have these been influential factors? What other factors influenced their perceptions on this issue? It would be valuable to explore these two types of different leaders' perceptions and behavior from various perspectives through a micro-ethnographic study.

2. The major academic area of study is important. Each participant responded by relating her own academic study field in explaining the concept of leadership from her unique background. That was very interesting. It could therefore be valuable to extend the study with administrators from other areas than those studied here. Further studies are needed about how academic study areas in higher education influence

the leadership competencies, learning experiences, and uniqueness in their profession.

3. I found that the female leaders learn leadership through various sources. Two interesting facts were discovered. First, female leaders in my study preferred reading as a way of learning new concepts. Second, gender-specific life experiences and women's different ways of knowing were reported by five women as unique learning sources. It is important to examine how the other 8 leaders view their gender socialization and why they do not describe it in the same way.

Some leaders strongly emphasized that they have advantages because of those unique experiences. These learning experiences were connected to collaboration, rather than competition, in human skills. They said that sometimes they have to believe their intuition rather than any evidence from stacks of papers. One leader claimed that her experiences of raising children and dealing with her husband made it possible for her to stay in her position longer than any of her other predecessors--males, nuns, and single women. It would be interesting to study how the female leaders enact their learning differently in their leadership position compared to others through micro-ethnographic study; how they make decisions, how they interact with others, how they resolute conflicts, and so forth.

4. In this study, the female leaders showed different

expectations of the male and female mentors who helped them. Also, three leaders responded that they were skeptical about mentoring and the role of traditional mentors. Interestingly, leaders who had many mentors responded that they have active mentee relationships, while those who did not had few or none. This points to an important issue about women's mentoring. Further research is needed to examine more specific relations between the mentoring experience women receive and their succeeding to the role of mentors for others.

5. Women's ways of networking is an interesting topic to pursue. In this study, some leaders perceive the new girls networking from a different perspective compared to that of male counterparts--such as support group. Examining women's support groups would be an interesting study in describing women's unique way of networking.

6. This study has been done for administrators of institutions in the public sector. Exploring female leaders' learning experiences and unique qualities for professional development would be interesting for the leaders in private universities and colleges.

### Reflection

Studying women leaders in academe was not easy. They are all extremely busy persons who can not be contacted directly without going through secretaries. Despite such difficulties, however, I was able to contact them personally. I appreciate

their efforts to accommodate the designs of my study, since my study heavily depended on interactions between me and the women leaders through letters, phone calls, and interviews. When I tried to contact some leaders to invite them to volunteer for the pilot study, I felt frustrated, since some leaders were not available for one or two months. But the main data collection procedure was easier than conducting the pilot study. By corresponding with the female leaders I interviewed, I learned a lot of things that went beyond my initial plan to learn about the female leaders' professional development. I appreciate the deepened understanding of my own femaleness which has come about as a result of my work with these leaders. I am also aware, however, that similar study concentrating on the professional development unique to male leaders would be valuable and important. In this section, I would like to share my own learning experiences from this study.

It seems as though my interview gave them a chance to reflect on their current positions. When I first visited them, I was worried about their time constraints. But only two leaders had difficulty giving me more time than we had originally agreed upon because of unexpected schedule changes. The rest of the interviewees made me feel comfortable in continuing the interview past the assigned length of time. They treated me with respect as a human being and willingly talked about themselves by giving me thoughtful responses.



Most of the leaders were punctual and well prepared for the interview questions. The times in which leaders talked thoroughly while having some tea with me at a table were invaluable. Now that I recognize the intensity of their workloads, I especially appreciate their input to my study. As one leader mentioned, they hardly give away their time:

Most of my time I spend time going through the stacks of letters that I get.... I really am trying to keep my eyes open for a professional development workshop, week, two weeks whatever ... that I can get away from this place, go to think about what I've been doing. (Powers)

Nevertheless, she continued the interview with me for 2 hours and 20 minutes. She was very considerate and she showed her interest in my questions. Also the other leader, Kelly, gave me her lunch hour besides the scheduled length of time, so we could talk in more detail about her experience. But all the leaders did not prepare for the interview in the same way. One leader was different. When I arrived at her office about 40 minutes earlier, she was talking with someone. After 20 minutes, when she started an interview, she totally forgot about the questions I had sent a week ago. "What was it? Oh it doesn't matter. Let's start." To me, she looked odd and strange as an academic administrator. But soon I found out what had made it possible for her to take that position: It was her critical thinking and creativity. She did not like the managerial attitude but she liked change, innovation, and research. She was not organized but creative. Her definition of the role of academic leader was interesting: "I am here to

create my college." That was a great challenge for her.

I also learned about the higher education environment, the organizational hierarchy, the way in which the women leaders interact with others, and the leaders' personal characteristics. My exploration of the 14 female leaders\* gave me a big picture of what it is like to have a career in an institution of higher education. But the best thing was getting to know the people--the women.

Another important learning experience from this study was that each person differs in responding and interacting by phone, letter, or interview. However, they shared certain values in the ways they think, behave, and respond. My impression of them was that they are very enthusiastic persons. Their personal strengths as a leader can be summarized as sensitive, inquisitive, positive, ambitious, self-confidence and hard working. I would like to share their personal strengths by quoting some examples:

Oh, well. I'm ambitious and fairly self-confident. My reaction to things is not "I can't do that", but rather, "I think I can do that." Um, I suppose probably the best description is I enjoy what I do and if I didn't I'd go find something else to do.

I think my strengths are that I'm basically uniquely an optimistic person and I don't get depressed easily. I wouldn't have stayed in this job for twelve years if I were .....going to give up easily.

I'm sensitive. That's a strength and a weakness. I cry. And that can be seen by people as being a terrible weakness....I really do care about equity. Not that everybody is treated the same but that everybody is treated equitably and some people don't hold that value. They really want all the

pie and they don't really care if it's not equitably distributed as long as they get all that they need.

I felt most comfortable when I recognized that the female leaders' personal and professional values and attitudes were coherent. Most of them emphasized the importance of harmony and balance. By listening to their interviews, reading the transcriptions and their articles, and decoding their handwritten responses, I really enjoyed myself and felt appreciation for being a female professional. Also, I found that these leaders continuously learn in their positions through various sources and the effect of learning (i.e. an exposure to women's studies) is critical on their beliefs and attitude. I feel their learning experiences and knowledge have to be explored further in social science studies.

Some leaders suggested the importance of establishing credentials and doing best in what you are doing. One leader said to me at an interview, that "to be a good leader, you have to build trust." That is, do best in your job, studying, teaching, raising children, or administering. Their behavior as participants in this study proved it. For me, seeing this proof was a most valuable learning experience as a woman, an experience resulting from my study of female leaders for my dissertation.

## **APPENDICES**

## Appendix A

## MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

OFFICE OF VICE PRESIDENT FOR RESEARCH  
AND DEAN OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

EAST LANSING • MICHIGAN • 48824-1046

February 20, 1991

Ms. Sangeun K. Kwon  
Educational Administration  
418 Erickson Hall

RE: THE SELF-PERCEIVED COMPETENCIES AND UNIQUENESS OF FEMALE LEADERS'  
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN SELECTED MICHIGAN HIGHER EDUCATION  
INSTITUTIONS, IRB#90-601

Dear Ms. Kwon:

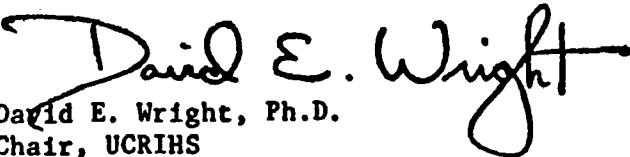
The above project is exempt from full UCRHS review. I have reviewed the proposed research protocol and find that the rights and welfare of human subjects appear to be protected. You have approval to conduct the research.

You are reminded that UCRHS approval is valid for one calendar year. If you plan to continue this project beyond one year, please make provisions for obtaining appropriate UCRHS approval one month prior to February 17, 1992.

Any changes in procedures involving human subjects must be reviewed by the UCRHS prior to initiation of the change. UCRHS must also be notified promptly of any problems (unexpected side effects, complaints, etc.) involving human subjects during the course of the work.

Thank you for bringing this project to our attention. If we can be of any future help, please do not hesitate to let us know.

Sincerely,

  
David E. Wright, Ph.D.  
Chair, UCRHS

DEW/ deo

cc: Dr. Howard Hickey

**Appendix B****Letter I : An Invitation To The Study**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

The purpose of this letter is to invite you to participate in a study of female leaders' perceptions on personal and professional development in Michigan higher education institutions. Your name was chosen from the 1990 edition of the Michigan Education Directory, on the basis of the selection criteria of this study, and upon recommendation by one or more of your colleagues.

The information will be used for Samgeun Kwon's doctoral dissertation at Michigan State University under the supervision of Dr. Howard Hickey. Research indicates that female leaders' professional development can not be separated from their personal development, since, from a developmental perspective, growth implies complex and ongoing interactions between the self and the environment. Women were excluded from organizational theory and little study has been done from a feminist perspective on gender and higher education administration. This study intends to understand female leaders' learning experiences from women's own terms.

Because this qualitative study will rely on only 10-12 respondents, your input will mean much to the research related to organization and female leadership, as well as providing useful information to women who are contemplating a career in college administration. If you are willing to participate, we believe you will find the one to two-hour interview session stimulating and worthwhile. All of the responses offered in the interview will be kept confidential to protect each participant's right to privacy, and each of the subjects has the right to withdraw from the study at any time.

Our schedule is flexible and we will make every effort to meet with you at your convenience. In the next few days, we will follow up this letter with a telephone call to see if you are willing to join us as a participant in this study.

Sincerely,

Howard Hickey  
Professor, College of Education  
(517-355-3691)

Samgeun K. Kwon  
Doctoral Student  
(517-355-6079)

**Appendix C**

**Letter II : Request For Interviewee's Background Information**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

To: \_\_\_\_\_

From: Samgeun K. Kwon and Howard Hickey

Re: Request for Interviewee's Background Information

Thank you for your interest in the study of female leaders in Michigan higher education institutions. Enclosed are a consent form and interview questions, as we talked by phone.

The interview will take about one to two hours to complete and will be tape recorded. You will be guaranteed anonymity and will be promised that your specific responses would not be credited to you by name. Interviewee's vita, speeches, and articles, if any, will be used as important sources of information and all information will remain completely anonymous.

It will be highly appreciated, if you send us your recent vita in advance. Also if you can send us your speeches and articles, it will be very helpful in having an indepth interview.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Samgeun K. Kwon

Enclosures I, II

**Appendix D****Explanation of the Study**

(Enclosure I)

This study is being conducted as part of Samgeun Kwon's doctoral dissertation under Dr. Howard Hickey's supervision from Michigan State University. The major purpose of this study is to investigate female administrators' perceptions of their competencies and uniqueness in their professional development in higher education institutions.

The interview will take about one to two hours to complete and will be tape recorded. The interviewee will be guaranteed anonymity and will be promised that her specific responses would not be credited to her by name.

Your participation is voluntary.

-----

**Consent to Participate**

I have been informed that this study is being conducted to investigate female administrators' competencies and uniqueness in their professional development in the higher education institution that I belong to. The purpose and procedure of the study have been explained to me, and I voluntarily agree to participate in the research.

I understand that all information will remain completely anonymous and that the results of the study will be available to me upon request.

Name (Please Print) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



## Appendix E

### The First Round: Interview Questions

(Enclosure II: The actual questions that I asked varied according to the interviewee's responses)

Interview Questions: The following questions will be asked at the scheduled interview on (date / time)

#### A. Competencies

1. Please tell me about your work. (related to your responsibilities and needed skills)
2. Please tell me about major competencies that were critical for your professional development.

#### B. Learning Experiences

1. Please tell me how you acquired those competencies.
2. Have you participated in any continuing education to acquire those competencies? What have you been reading?
3. Did you have any mentors? (male:      female:      ) How did they help you?
4. What did you learn during your tenure as a woman administrator (particular scenario)?

#### C. Uniqueness as Woman Leader

1. Please tell me about your unique advantages as woman that have helped your professional development.
2. Please tell me about your unique disadvantages as woman that have hindered your professional development.

-----  
Demographic Information :      Please fill out the following demographic information before the scheduled interview.

1. Title of current position \_\_\_\_\_
2. Degree and Major \_\_\_\_\_
3. Years in college administration \_\_\_\_\_
4. Years of current position \_\_\_\_\_
5. Age \_\_\_\_\_
6. Marital status \_\_\_\_\_
7. Number of children \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix F****Letter III : Request for Follow-Up Responses**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

1303D University Vlg  
Michigan State University  
East Lansing, MI 48823

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

Thank you for the great interview and the speeches and articles that you sent to me. Those are very helpful for my study. I really appreciate your input on my study and your thoughtful responses. In Korea, when people go out of their way on our behalf, we like to present with a token of our appreciation. I'm enclosing ginseng tea. This represents health and vitality in your life.

I have the last interview with you being transcribed, and now I am reviewing it. I am enclosing for your files a transcribed copy of our interview.

In my review of all the interviews I've conducted, I found that I think I need some more information for my analysis.

Please respond to part A and B attached and send to me as soon as possible. Part A represents questions that you did not mention but which some other leaders did and which they saw as important. (Also I included a checking list of your reading materials). Part B is developed from your interview response and represents issues I want to explore further. I've identified a question I hope you can elaborate on. This question emerges from your interview with me. I've included as background selected piece of our interview which touch on this topic. I appreciate your helping me understand further your experience with and perspective on this issue.

Thank you so much. Please feel free to send in your responses in whatever form is convenient for you. You can hand write on the attached or use a separate sheet. If for whatever reason you prefer to pursue these questions in a brief interview (either face to face or on the telephone), I'd be happy to arrange that. If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at 517-355-6079.

Again, Thank you.

Sincerely Yours,

Samgeun K. Kwon

Enc.

## Appendix G

### The Second Round: Follow-Up Questions (An Example: Brown)

#### Part A

1. Among the competencies that were critical for your position, what is(are) the area(s) that you have had to develop? What is(are) the area(s) you have had difficulties in developing, and why?

2. Have you ever had any proteges (mentees) that you mentored? (Male: \_\_\_\_\_ Female: \_\_\_\_\_ None: \_\_\_\_\_) Please explain the relationships and the kind of interactions you had.

3. Please list your professional values.

4. What are your strengths and weaknesses as a leader?

5. Do you want to receive a summary of the results of my study?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_\_

Part B (An Example: Brown)

I found that you are the best person who can \*compare the deanship with the central administration (provost). You mentioned that job tasks and responsibilities, and the needed competencies, have changed along with the ladder of administrative positions. \* Could you illustrate more specifically about the competencies that were critical in each position (Dean and Provost)?

-----  
 (Referential Part of the Interview Transcription)

R: ..... \*In terms of my own professional development, that's a lot of what we want to start with entry level professionals and then as you go up in administration, you do have to become I think competent at dealing with a broader range of issues. When you're a faculty member responsible for one area or working in one discipline. That does not expand you as much as administration. Where as a department chair, you take on as your commitment the responsibility for the department. As a dean, it's your responsibility to account for the entire college. These are competencies that really take a very careful building to look at a broader base of the world and how you use information.

I: Do you see any differences between chairperson and dean?

R: Oh, significantly. This is what I was just talking about. The department is a much smaller more contained are that covers less specialty. And why you have to then be familiar as a chair with all the specialties in your department. \* At the dean's level you have to not only be responsible for that but also a much wider array of departments and then the provost position is university wide.

**Appendix H****Letter IV : A Reminder of The Follow-Up Questions**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

1303D University Vlg  
Michigan State University  
East Lansing, MI 48823

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

This is a reminder of the follow up questions that I had sent in March. I made a phone call to your secretary a week ago. Because of the time frame, I need your response as soon as possible. This will be the last chance to get your response to my follow up questions.

I understand that you are so busy, but it would be highly appreciated if you let me know whether you could respond. I am sending another copy of the questions for your convenience. Please respond to parts A and B and send to me as soon as possible. If I can not get your answer by 15th of May, then I will have to not include them.

As I mentioned last time, part A represents questions that you did not mention but which some other leaders did and which they saw as important. Also I have included a check list of your reading materials. Part B is developed from your interview response and represents issues I want to explore further. I've identified a question I hope you can elaborate on. This question emerges from your interview with me. I've included as background a selected piece of our interview which touches on this topic. I appreciate your helping me understand further your experience with and perspective on this issue.

Thank you so much. Please feel free to send in your responses in whatever form is convenient for you. You can hand write on the attached sheet or use a separate sheet. If for whatever reason you prefer to pursue these questions in a brief interview (either face-to-face or on the telephone), I'd be happy to arrange that. If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at 517-355-6079.

Again, Thank you.

Sincerely Yours,

Samgeun K. Kwon

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