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RESPONSE TO "GENDER AND LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOR AMONG SENIOR PASTORS" BY STEPHEN FOGARTY

Lily A. Arasaratnam

The author introduces the argument that women are not given the same opportunities as men for assuming positions of leadership and proposes that gender-based stereotypes as one of the reasons for this phenomenon of the "glass ceiling." The author goes on to argue that women in Christian organizations are further debilitated from serving in positions of leadership due to theological arguments that are put forth as justification for the status quo (i.e. predominantly male dominated leadership circles).

> *Comment:* The case is well-introduced. It would be good to engage the literature on stereotyping in this part of the essay, to boost the underlying argument that gender-based stereotypes have contributed to the status quo.

Using Yukl and other relevant writers in leadership literature as points of reference, the author builds the argument that today's contemporary organizations require a style of leadership that is collaborative, empathetic, and infused with competence in interpersonal skills. The author goes on to Eagly and Carli's claim that these qualities are consistent with a female's gender role. Though the claim is not made directly, it appears here that the author is in agreement with Eagly and Carli.

> *Comment:* Given the author's previous argument that women are not given equal opportunities at leadership as men because of gender-based stereotypes, I would caution against relying on another form of stereotyping to build the case for female leadership.

The author goes on to introduce transformational leadership and its benefits, and makes the case that there is evidence to suggest that

female leaders (in church context) are better at exhibiting transformational leadership.

> *Comment*: This is more of a structural comment. Instead of writing a literature review that is separate from the first part of the essay, combine the literature review to build a cohesive argument that leads to your research question. Then present the hypotheses, and then go to the method section. There should only be one conclusion in the essay – it is confusing to have a conclusion after the literature review and then another conclusion at the end of the essay.

The purpose of the study, as the author, explains, is a quest to find out the relationship between gender and the usage of the various styles of leadership, namely transformational, transactional, and laissez-fair. Four hypotheses are proposed. The hypotheses are consistent with the argument built with evidentiary support.

> *Comment:* For the sake of clarity, it is best to state your research question(s) in question-form instead of statements. Because the research questions were not stated as such (as questions, that is), it is hard to clearly connect them to the hypotheses that are later presented.

The data collection method, results, and analyses, discussion, and conclusion are presented.

> *Comment:* As you correctly acknowledge in your limitations, an N of 47 is far too small a sample size to arrive at any noteworthy conclusions, especially given the MLQ has 36 items (for which a sample size of 360 would have been ideal). Though you have utilized the appropriate analyses for hypotheses testing the large amount if non-significant results are most likely due to the small sample size, and hence it is hard to determine whether Type II errors have been committed (failure to reject the null hypotheses when they are true). For the purpose of this presentation, perhaps it would have been better to end the essay at the proposal state, formulating the hypotheses, and outlining a plan to test them.

Overall Comments

The topic of this essay is an interesting and relevant one. Here are few suggestions for the author, as he progresses in research in this area:

1) Think of leadership outside of gender-role stereotypes. The "for" and "against" arguments in this essay are both grounded in stereotypes. It might be helpful to first think of leadership styles in terms of personality traits and skills. Instead of reverting to the stereotypic thinking that females are better at exhibiting empathetic and transformational behaviours, a stronger argument would be to link personality and skills to preferred/effective styles of leadership – and make the case that whoever exhibits these skills needs to be given the opportunity to lead, regardless of gender.
2) Given the case was made that theological arguments have been traditionally utilized in the church environment to prevent female leadership, it would be good to weave in a strong counter-theological argument as to why the traditional interpretations may be inaccurate, and weave these arguments into a case you build in which you present the ideal traits/skills necessary for effective leadership. In other words, given the focus on church leadership, it would be most effective to integrate leadership literature with theological literature to build one unified argument that leadership should be based on effectiveness of style and implementation instead of gender.
3) I would recommend that you aim for 10 (5 at the very least) participants per item on a scale, to ensure good quality results from your statistical analyses. I would also recommend that you include some related scales (other than MLQ) to be able to verify your MLQ results. For example, you may want to include scales that measure listening, attitude towards diversity, charisma, etc., which are related variables to some of the MLQ subscales. This would help you to test the validity of your results.

Well done, and wish you all the best with your research endeavours!