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Climbing the Himalayas

A cross-cultural analysis of female leadership and glass ceiling effects in non-profit organizations

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Abstract

Purpose – The present study aims at contributing to the knowledge of organizational communication and cross-cultural leadership by examining the relationship between cultural values and expected female leadership styles in non-profit organizations in Taiwan and the US. Design/methodology/approach – In total, 307 Rotarians in Taiwan and the US completed a survey meant to reveal their cultural values and expected female leadership styles. In addition, the method of semi-structured interviews was used to raise the participants' consciousness of and critical reflections upon social practices regarding female leadership.

Findings – The research results are threefold. First, among the three major leadership styles, Rotarians in both countries expect female leaders to display transformational leadership. Second, laissez-faire leadership style can be better explained by the variables of cultural values and country than transformational and transactional leadership styles. Finally, to successfully confront gender discrimination, female leaders need to oftentimes behave much more progressively and actively and sometimes make necessary compromises of their female qualities to overcome the barriers just like climbing over the Himalayas.

Practical implications – The research findings imply that national culture is not the only factor to account for the expected female leadership styles. Future studies of leadership concepts and styles should include more variables such as organizational culture, political system, language, and feminine or masculine characteristics. Based on the results, the so-called "glass-ceiling effects" have been broken bit by bit; yet, female leaders still need to "climb over the Himalayas" and pass through a tortuous, demanding, and exhausting path in order to move upward.

Originality/value – As the first study of its kind, this study has filled the gap by expanding leadership studies to cross-cultural contexts, thus contributing to the body of human knowledge of cross-cultural leadership in non-profit organizations of Rotary Clubs.

Keywords Female leadership styles, Full-range leadership framework, Cultural dimensions, Non-profit organizations, Cross cultural studies, Triangulation, Taiwan, United States of America, Leadership, Women

Paper type Research paper

To elevate the status of women, international organizations have been making great efforts and there has been concrete evidence showing the continuous improvement of women's positions and dramatic achievements of women's empowerment in all walks of life in both developed and developing countries. For instance, in the business world, Indian-born Indra Nooyi was promoted to the chief executive officer (CEO) of PepsiCo in 2006, and Irene Rosenfeld became the CEO of Kraft Foods, the world's second largest food producer. The famous CEO of Hewlett-Packard (HP), Carly Fiorina, is another example of top female business executives. She was elected as the most powerful woman in business in 1998 and 1999 by Fortune magazine (Wu and Hsieh, 2006).

However, in actuality, the progress for women around the world, "while steady, has been painfully slow" (Chen, 2005, p. 1). For instance, in the US, as Mather (2007) reported, although women currently accounted for nearly one-half of the total US labor force, only 16 percent of the chief executives were women in the nation, and their median salary was almost $30,000 less than the average male executives in one survey of 188 of the US largest non-profit organizations. In addition, according to Falk and Grizard (2005), in American Fortune 500 companies, females occupied just 13.6 percent of managerial positions. In other corporations, only 16 percent of the managers were women, and they held just 4 percent of senior managerial positions. Obviously, "men were disproportionately represented in upper-level management and earn higher salaries than women at all levels of the organization" (Pynes, 2000, p. 35). In Taiwan, the rate of female participation in business and politics also lags behind that of men and that of other developed areas around the world. Within Taiwan proper, the number of females accounts for just 16 percent of managerial and administrative positions (Wu and Hsieh, 2006). To sum up, it is true that female political and economic status has been promoted because of equal rights efforts and education. Nonetheless, female participation rates in public affairs and decision-making positions are still quite low.

Recently, some scholars have also urged to examine leadership in a cross-cultural context. For instance, House (1995) remarked that about 98 percent of leadership theory emanates from the US. Bass (1995) added that there has been a need for research in more culturally diverse settings as most leadership research has used samples merely from western cultures. Moreover, since there have been very few studies examining female leadership in non-profit organizations in different countries or cultures in communication studies, the author aims to fill in this void by conducting a comparative and cross-cultural study on the impact of cultural values upon the expected female leadership styles in non-profit organizations of Rotary Clubs in Taiwan and the US. In this study, the author hopes to explore the relationship between cultural values and expected female leadership styles in Taiwan and the US and find out the best predictors of leadership style expectations. Meanwhile, the author also intends to search for the reasons for why the majority of female leaders are not moving to top positions in Rotary Clubs and what effective strategies they usually develop for dealing with the male-dominated organizations in Taiwan and the US.

Literature review

The study of leadership has a long history with abundant scholarship both in China and the US. According to Chang (2008), the Chinese study of different leadership styles began to be recorded in historical documents 2,500 years ago. In the US, however, there have been more profound and comprehensive scholarships on leadership in the past several decades. For instance, there have been more than 7,500 studies relevant to leadership in the social and science literature in the US (Aldoory and Toth, 2004). For the purpose of this study, the author will briefly review the Chinese and American scholarships on leadership in terms of cultural values, gender, and leadership styles in the following section.

Cultural values

Research has shown that cultural values not only guide people's behavior, but also influence their leadership styles (Booysen, 1999, 2000; Hofstede, 1980a, b, 1991, 1998; House et al., 1997, 1999).

Hofstede (1980a) defined value as "a broad tendency to prefer to certain states of affairs over others" (p. 19). Cultural values, according to Martin and Nakayama (2007), refer to "the worldview of a cultural group and its set of deeply held beliefs," which are also the "core symbols that define a particular identity" (pp. 93-94). For example, individualism is often cited as one of the most important European American values, as reflected in the emphasis on participative leadership. In the case of Taiwan, although studies show that the current generation is more individualistic than older generations, the traditional value of collectivism is the core symbol of the Taiwanese culture and social structure, as reflected in the preference in authoritarian leadership (Wu and Stewart, 2005). In sum, all of the above scholars agreed that values form the core of culture and cultural values exert impact upon leadership styles.

Leadership styles

Leadership is defined as "the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how it can be done effectively, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish the shared objectives" (Yukl, 2002, p. 7). Eagly et al. (2003) summarized and described three major leadership styles based on their multifactor leadership questionnaire. Briefly, transformational leaders tend to bring about change in organizations and establish oneself as a role model by gaining the followers' trust. Transactional leaders, however, usually appeal to subordinates' self-interest through establishing exchange relationships with them. Leaders following the laissez-faire style are often found failing to take responsibilities for what they are managing.

In contrast, the Chinese leadership styles in Taiwan, according to some scholars (Chang, 2008; Chen, 2005), are based on the philosophies of Legalism, Taoism, and Confucianism on the one hand. On the other hand, they have also integrated contemporary western theories of leadership into actual practice. As a result, leadership styles in Taiwan demonstrate three frame orientations: director, parent, and mentor. Originated from legalism, the features of the director leadership style are legality, strategy, and position. Parent leadership style is based on Taoism, and leaders and followers form emotional relationships that function like a family to a great extent. Finally, the mentor leadership style reflects the influence of Confucianism and leader-led relationships are similar to mentor-learner dynamics with such features as guiding, sharing, and inspiring.

From the above, it is clear to see that differences in cultural values in Taiwan and the US shape different leadership styles. Although frequent exchanges in all social sectors between the two peoples have brought about more and more commonalities, there still exist substantial discrepancies in leadership styles in the two societies. As this study specifically addresses female leadership, it is crucial to examine the relevant scholarships on gender and leadership styles.

Gender and leadership styles

With regard to the relationship between gender and leadership styles, many studies (Aldoory and Toth, 2004; Bass and Avolio, 1997; Eagly, 2007; Eagly et al., 2003; Morgan, 2006) indicated that there is a significant difference between male and female leadership styles. For instance, in 1991, the International Women's Forum (IWF) conducted a survey and discovered that male supervisors tend to adopt a transactional leadership style, which means that man would give nominal rewards when subordinates do something right and punish them if they do something wrong. On the other hand, female supervisors tend to use a transformational leadership style, which means that the leader will achieve the company's major

goals, by actively interacting with subordinates, encouraging employee involvement in decision making, sharing authority and information, respecting employee self-value, and encouraging employees to love their jobs.

Besides, Bass and Avolio (1997) indicated that the development tendency of US organizations may contribute to the exhibition and emphasis of female leadership styles. Female leaders tend to use more transformational leadership skills than male leaders, often making a positive impact on the performance of an individual, group, and organization. Morgan (2006) also remarked, organizations that are shaped by male value systems emphasize logical, linear modes of thought and action, and drive for productivity at the cost of network and community building. In contrast, organizations that are shaped by female value systems tend to "balance and integrate the rational-analytic mode with values that emphasize more empathic, intuitive, organic forms of behavior" (p. 131). Chao and Ha (2008) reconfirmed the above study results in their qualitative study, which examined top female leaders in the US cable industry and found that these female leaders demonstrated a common use of the transformational leadership style and integrating conflict management strategy.

Based on their meta-analysis of 45 studies of transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles, Eagly et al. (2003) noted, female leadership styles are more transformational and women leaders are more likely to use rewards for appropriate performance from subordinates. Thus, compared with their male counterparts, female leaders are "more focused on those aspects of leadership that predict effectiveness" (p. 586). However, women and men do not enjoy equal access to opportunities of leadership, and they may be treated differently even if they are in leadership positions. Just as Eagly (2007) described, women "are still portrayed as suffering disadvantages in access to leadership positions as well as prejudice and resistance when they occupy these roles" (p. 1). The fact is that in the US today, women are often considered secondary in competitions to obtain leadership positions though research findings prove that women have "the right combination of skills for leadership, yielding superior leadership styles and outstanding effectiveness" (p. 1).

From the above, it can be inferred that the issues concerning gender and leadership styles are very extensive; one single factor is not sufficient to make a thorough study. Besides gender, factors affecting leadership styles may include management level, organizational style, work ambiance (such as departmental heterogeneity and team members' gender), industrial type, size, and company policy (Van Engen et al., 2001). It is also clear that the bulk of the leadership literature reflects Western industrialized culture. For instance, Hofstede's (1980a) study used subjects from a large US multinational corporation with a strong American culture. It is likely that most leadership scholarships are culture-bound, reflecting the US values and beliefs. Therefore, putting a cross-cultural study of female leadership styles on the agenda has become all the more necessary. The review of relevant scholarships in the above sections also shows that the leadership style of female supervisors is turning to the trend of transformational leadership. Due to the development and the popularity of non-profit organizations, competitions among similar organizations have become more severe, and the pressure resulting from such competitions inevitably create conflicts among members. As the number of females who are either involved in or lead non-profit organizations is rapidly increasing, how females cope with difficulties, especially in the male-dominated organizations is an issue worthy to be studied.

Cultural values and female leadership

According to Engen et al. (2001), since the transformational leadership style emphasizes the leader's intellectual stimulation and the individual consideration given to employees, this style can be depicted as a feminine leadership style. As mentioned previously, some studies discovered female leaders displaying more transformational behaviors and fewer transactional styles than male leaders. In addition, transactional and transformational leadership have also been examined in various cultures. For example, Yokochi (1989) reported that the top leaders in several large Japanese firms rated by followers as more transformational also had higher ratings on their followers' level of effectiveness.

Furthermore, according to Earley and Gibson (1998), a number of cross-cultural studies have shown that collectivists tend to have a stronger attachment to their organizations and tend to subordinate their individual goals to group goals. Indeed, many leaders in collectivist cultures highlight the importance of maintaining long-term relationships as well as in-group solidarity (Elenkov, 1998). The aforementioned central values of collectivist cultures are some of the main orientations associated with transformational leadership. That is, a transformational leader is anticipated to build followers' identification with a collective vision, as well as to enhance motivation and performance among followers (Jung et al., 1995).

By contrast, to satisfy their own self-interests, people with high individualism place higher priority on individual achievement, as well as on personal rewards based on satisfying transactional agreements. The person or self is defined as an independent entity. These characteristics match the transactional leadership model since they are typically more focused on short-term results. Given the previous rationale and literature review, the author proposed the following hypothesis:

> H1. Cultural values and expected female leadership styles in Taiwan and the US are significantly correlated with each other.

In addition, the researcher also strived to investigate how female leaders have tried to break the glass ceiling and developed a suitable and effective strategy to deal with such male-dominated organizations, two research questions were also asked:

> RQ1. Why are the majority of female leaders not moving to top positions in Rotary Clubs?

> RQ2. How can female leaders develop suitable and effective strategies for dealing with the male-dominated organizations in Taiwan and the US?

Method

For this research, the author employed surveys and semi-structured interviews to "triangulate" the data in order to offer breadth in describing the relationship between cultural values and expected female leadership styles and depth in revealing the challenges and dealing strategies of female leaders in both Taiwan and the US. Specifically, this research was conducted in the Rotary Clubs in District 3510 of Taiwan and District 6600 of the US. According to Rotary International (2007), there are 71 clubs in District 3510, including 42 male clubs, eight female clubs, and 21 mixed gender clubs. Among these clubs, there are 15 female presidents (21 percent) and three district governor assistants (15 percent) from

2007 to 2008. Although District 6600 does not have any single sex clubs, it includes 15 male district governor assistants but no female governor assistants from 2007 to 2008. In the following section, before presenting a brief description of the in-depth interview, I will first report the survey process by focusing on the formal study and instruments, sampling and participants, and validity and reliability.

Survey

Formal study and instruments. Constrained by the shortage of time, resources, and funds, the author first used the mail survey method to collect data so as to explore the causal relationship between the cultural values of the Rotarians and their general expectations of female leadership styles in Taiwan and the US. The survey instrument in this study was developed by using some existing, field-tested leadership measures including Bass and Avolio's (1997) Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire Form 6S (MLQ6S), and Hofstede's (1994) Value Survey Module (VSM94). However, since VSM94 was initially designed for American culture, and this study was conducted in both Taiwan and the US, some scale items were changed to include culturally specific items in order to minimize cultural bias. Therefore, two of Hofstede's dimensions (power distance and uncertainty avoidance) were not adopted for this study because of several reasons. First, there is less power distance in non-profit organizations since non-profit organization members tend to follow self-governing and voluntary models, and everyone is supposed to be equal in such settings. Second, according to Howell (1992), the items of uncertainty avoidance index reflect three different constructs. Wu and Stewart (2005) added that the dimension of uncertainty avoidance is not statistically reliable. Apart from this, the author also expanded Hofstede's cultural dimension of long-term orientation (or Confucian work dynamics) by operationalizing it as "customs" and long-term relationships."

Thus, the questionnaire contains three parts. Part A comprises 20 declarative statements to measure four cultural dimensions (collectivism, masculinity, customs, and long-term relationships). On all subscales, a high score indicates a high degree of the characteristics concerned. For instance, a high score on the collectivism dimension displays a high degree of collectivism. An example of the statements on collectivism is "Harmony and consensus in our club are ultimate goals." Part B assesses Rotarians' expected female leadership style. The 21 items in Part B are adapted from the MLQ6S, including transformational leadership style, transactional leadership styles, and laissez-faire style. A sample item of transformational leadership style looks like "I expect female leaders to let members feel good to be around them." Part C asks for the demographic information of the participants. The items in the first two parts asked the respondents to indicate how much they disagree or agree with each of the statement on a five-point Likert scale (1 ¼ strongly disagree to 5 ¼ strongly agree).

For cross-cultural research, it is imperative to create equivalent bases upon which such comparisons could be based, and the equivalence can only be assured through the use of rigorous procedures, such as back-translation (Lonner, 1979). Thus, the questionnaire was designed in English and translated into Chinese. A Chinese doctoral student translated the Chinese version of the questionnaire backward into English. An American professor compared the original English questionnaire and the back-translated version to identify the questions that could cause differences between the original and the back-translation. The translation was revised to deal with the differences. All participants were invited to complete the questionnaire in their native languages.

Sampling and participants. As mentioned, the present study was conducted in Rotary Clubs. Briefly, Rotary is an international organization of business and professional leaders who provide humanitarian service, encourage high ethical standards in all vocations, and help build goodwill and peace in the world. More than 160 countries worldwide have Rotary Clubs. Approximately, 1.2 million Rotarians belong to more than 30,000 Rotary Clubs (Rotary International, 2007). Two independent samples are Rotarians drawn from the population of Rotary District 3510 in Taiwan and Rotary District 6600 in the US since the researcher has been an active Rotarian in both districts. The samples for this study were selected based on the criteria of functional equivalence and representativeness. The samples are functionally equivalent since all of the participants are Rotarians in both locations. Since Rotary is an international organization, its members around the world all share similar missions and goals, provide similar objectives of services, and observe the same criteria. In addition, the two districts are similar in size (71 clubs in District 3510 and 67 clubs in District 6600). To be representative of the targeted Rotarians, the sample was randomly chosen. In total, 1,100 copies of the questionnaire were sent out to Rotarians in District 3510 in Taiwan and District 6600 in the US. Finally, the total number of the effective participants was 307.

The data show that the number of male respondents is 2.5 times (60.7 percent) that of female respondents (24 percent) in Taiwan, while the number of male respondents (84.1 percent) is five times that of female respondents (16.7 percent) in the US. The overall distribution of formal educational attainment is slightly skewed to higher education with the majority of the sample earning a bachelor degree (43.3 percent) in Taiwan. The majority of the US samples even have master's or PhD degrees (45.9 percent). This means that, overall, both samples are well-educated in the two districts, and most of the respondents are married (76.7 percent in Taiwan and 86.5 percent in the US).

In Taiwan, most respondents are between 51-65 years of age (43.3 percent) with a mean of 55 years of age, while in the US, most respondents are similarly between 51-65 years of age (41.7 percent) with a mean of 57 years of age. There are two major differences between the US respondents and Taiwanese respondents. The Taiwanese respondents have much longer tenure and are more likely to have former leader positions in Rotary Clubs. As for the years of membership, most respondents have 11 to 20 years of membership (35.4 percent) in Taiwan, but most respondents have just four to ten years of membership (37.8 percent) in the US. While nearly half of the samples are past presidents (46.7 percent), more than half of the respondents are regular members (52.9 percent) in the US. In terms of their work positions, most respondents are in managerial positions in both countries with the US slightly higher in proportion of respondents holding managerial positions (48 percent in Taiwan and 66.9 percent in the US). Finally, most Taiwanese respondents believe in Buddhism (58.7 percent) whereas most US respondents' religious beliefs are either Christianity or Catholicism (93 percent).

Validity and reliability. After running the Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha tests for the formal questionnaire, this study encountered low reliability scores for some items. To achieve acceptable reliability scores, three items were cancelled in Part A. As for the leadership items in Part B, all the three leadership clusters performed adequately, ranging from a ¼ 0.917 to a ¼ 0.681 in the present study. Just as Clark and Watson (1995) indicated, reliabilities in the 0.6 to 0.7 range have been characterized as good or adequate. The factors of customs and long-term relationships fell below the recommended value but were included in the analysis because they approximated the cut-off scores. Nevertheless, the low reliability coefficients were viewed as a limitation to the study. The internal consistency coefficients of the items in the questionnaire are presented in Table I.

Interview

To understand the insightful descriptions and explanations of the female leaders, the researcher has also conducted 15 interviews with current/past female presidents in both districts, who performed their duties on the basis of their voluntariness and willingness. As for data analysis of the interview transcripts, theme analysis of the interpretive method was used in this research. After doing semi-structured in-depth interviews, the researcher perused and compared all the interview transcripts in order to find common themes formed by a similar event or belief mentioned by at least two interviewees. The interpretive method was also used to explore the obstacles female leaders in Rotary Clubs were facing and the conflict strategies they were applying in the male-dominated non-profit organizations.

Results

> H1. Cultural values and expected female leadership styles in Taiwan and the US are significantly correlated with each other.

In order to compare the country differences between cultural values and expected female leadership styles and determine how different variables affect each other, a series of regression analysis were run via Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). To find the best equations in predicting each expected leadership style, the author examined three models as shown in Tables II-IV.

Before looking at the exact results concerning the expected leadership styles, it is necessary to point out that model 1 includes the focus independent variables: four cultural dimensions and the variable country. In model 2, all control variables such as gender, age, marital status, length of membership, education, religious beliefs, club's position, and business position were added. In model 3, four cross products were created in order to examine the interactions between country and each cultural dimension. Following are the research findings of the expected leadership styles:

- *Transformational leadership.* In this regression analysis as seen in Table II, the cultural value of long-term relationship is the best predictor of transformational leadership style expectations among the variables in the study ($\beta = 0.385$, p , 0.001). In other words, people who treasure long-term relationships are likely to expect their female leaders to display transformational leadership style. In addition, the cultural variables of collectivism ($\beta = 0.184$, p , 0.01) and Taiwan ($\beta = 20.311$, p , 0.05) also have significant effects on the variable of expecting female leaders to display transformational leadership style.
- *Transactional leadership.* Based on the data analysis in Table III, the variable customs is the best predictor of transactional leadership style expectations among the variables in this regression analysis ($\beta = 0.272$, p , 0.001). In addition, the variables of Christianity ($\beta = 0.238$), long-term relationships ($\beta = 0.186$), and masculinity (beta ¼ 20.128) also have significant impact on expectations of female leaders using transactional leadership style. The predictive power of cultural dimensions and cross products for the transaction leadership style expectation is low.
- *Laissez-faire leadership.* In this regression analysis in Table IV, the interaction term Taiwan x long-term relationships is the strongest predictor variable among all variables. Its high standardized coefficient has statistically significant effect on the response variable: expectations

of female leaders using laissez-faire leadership style (β = 20.889, p , 0.001). In addition, the variable managerial also has negative significant effects on the variable of expecting female leaders to demonstrate laissez-faire leadership style (β = 20.113).

In sum, the above-mentioned results reveal that there is a significant relationship between cultural dimensions and Rotarians' expected female leadership styles in both settings. In addition, the cultural dimensions and the country variables best predict the respondents' expectations of laissez-faire and transformational leadership styles, but they are much weaker in predicting the respondents' transactional leadership style:

> RQ1. Why are the majority of female leaders not advancing to top positions in Rotary Clubs?

According to Northouse (2010), gender-role stereotyping is one of the biggest difficulties that female leaders have faced in their work environment. This stereotyping always influences people's perception about female leader's behavior. Therefore, to answer this question, the researcher also wanted to examine whether gender stereotype in Rotary Clubs would result in the glass-ceiling effects, which refers to the invisible barriers that prevent women from climbing into advanced leadership positions.

Among the 15 female interviewees, eight said that they did not feel the glass-ceiling effects or obstacles to promotion. However, six clearly felt the glass-ceiling effects or obstacles to promotion. One female leader did not know how to answer this question. As the data indicate, female glass-ceiling effects do exist in the Rotary Clubs in both districts, but not as clearly as expected.

No apparent glass-ceiling effects

Eight interviewees said that they were not affected by apparent glass-ceiling effects or situations of dilemma. They emphasized that Rotary Clubs are different from business organizations, and those who are more willing or actively involved in clubs' projects are elected comparatively easier. The only issues are their willingness and family situations (interviewees TF7, TF8, TF10, TF11, TF13, TF14, AF8, and AF11).

These interviewees further indicated that promotion in Rotary Clubs depends on the individual performance, personal dedication, loyalty to Rotary, and spare time for Rotary services. The promotion seldom relies on the criterion of gender:

> Rotary is different from other occupations. In other occupations, you can get pay, but here you cannot. You need to consider your situation first, such as time, financial condition, and family issues. Gender is not an issue for being a district governor (interviewee TF7).

Therefore, if members are performing well in their clubs, keeping good communication with other clubs, then being a district governor or even district officer is within expectation. For instance, Interviewee TF8 said that she was a good example because she was elected as a district governor four years ago. In such organizations, the gender issue is not an important factor for advancing to top positions.

Having apparent glass-ceiling effects

Although some female leaders emphasized that the glass-ceiling effects are not very obvious, six female leaders, however, felt obstacles and negative evaluation due to the glass-ceiling effects (TF6, TF12, AF6,

AF7, AF9, and AF10). From the analysis of the transcripts, promotion obstacles and stereotypes exist in three aspects:

Family role. Among the six interviewees, three remarked that they clearly felt that they were expected to be at home instead of being active in their careers or Rotary Clubs (interviewees TF6, TF 12, and AF7). For example, when they were elected as presidents, instead of being congratulated, they received opinions regarding more burdens for the families and the duties beyond their abilities. Some of the interviewees said that although they were making time and efforts to perform well, they were still expected to be at home taking care of the children and husbands, and their performances were even under suspicion:

> Once I was discussing with some past presidents about the issue of being district governor, a male past president told me that I should not take this position too seriously. Instead, I should spend more time with my husband and kids at home. Sometimes when you join some dinner meetings, some Rotarians would ask you why you did not go back home and prepare meals for your family. They still have stereotypes toward females (interviewee TF12).

> I think females are more responsible for their families. That's why some young female members left the organization when they got pregnant or have children. I would do the same. Family is always my first priority (interviewee AF7).

Deeply-rooted male culture. Among the six interviewees, three (TF12, AF9, AF10) emphasized that Rotary Clubs are still an environment with deeply-rooted male culture. The males enjoyed privileges while the females were respected in formality:

> In my opinion, Rotary is still a male-dominated organization. Inherited from such male-privileged environment, women's capabilities were not cared about and respected (interviewee TF12).

> I think there are still some people, males or females, who are more receptive to male authority. I think that's a problem that female leaders have to face. We still have a tendency toward male authority (AF9).

That females are not respected in the male culture can be seen in discrimination against women and channel of promotion in the hands of males. Due to gender, females find it hard to get integrated into the male-dominated world. For example women are prohibited from joining men's social networking activities. In addition, men have long established the old boy network, and they naturally control the promotion channels. One interviewee signed:

> At present the positions of the official director of Rotary International all belong to males. As I have observed for such a long time, it will be meaningless if you are not ambitious enough to get promoted because men control the opportunities of the top positions (interviewee TF6).

In addition, there is another phenomenon from the research that is worth noticing. Some Taiwanese interviewees criticized the existence of single sex clubs due to the gender difference. For example, District 3510, Taiwan, is composed of 71 clubs, including 42 male clubs, eight female clubs, and 21 mixed gender clubs. Among these clubs, there are 15 female presidents (21 percent) and three district governor assistants (15 percent) from 2007 to 2008. Although District 6600 does not have any single sex clubs, it includes 15 male district governor assistants but no female governor assistants from 2007 to

2008. According to TF6 and TF12, there are some reasons for these single sex clubs to reject different sex members. For instance, the wives of the male members may be jealous of the female members, and males may doubt about females' intensions to become Rotarians. Moreover, males keep females out of their clubs so that females will not interfere with their freedom:

> I used to try to apply to a club which does not mix with women. Although I tried hard, they refused to have females in their clubs. They kind of have the same reason for doing so. They want to go away from their daily life world and get into their own space. They don't want to lose such rights. Otherwise, they have to change the way they talk, the jokes they tell, and some other crazy behaviors (TF6).

> I think there are some other women who join the club because of their positions. For example, some bank managers join Rotary because they have jobs to do here. That's fine with me. I don't think it is possible to generalize, but males would not think like me (TF12).

Difference in male and female evaluation. Apart from the above, two interviewees remarked that due to the stereotypical impact, the capabilities of females are evaluated with different criterion resulting in a kind of dilemma for females in their behaviors (interviewees AF6, AF10). The interviewees said that according to the tradition, some males find it hard to accept female leaders. Therefore, females are likely to get negative or extreme assessment. For example, when the female leaders are either strict or soft in their leadership styles, there will be complaints or criticism. In general, people use different criteria to assess the capabilities of males and females. With such standards, females must be more capable or work harder than males so as to be promoted:

> Because male leaders are still more in number than females in Rotary Clubs, what I do may get some weird looks. If you are tough, there will be negative criticism; if you are very nice, others may say that you are incapable or even you intend to flatter others (interviewee TF6).

> In many companies, if a female and a male are comparable in capabilities, most probably the male will get promoted. Although Rotary is different from these companies, this situation may still happen sometimes (interviewee TF12).

Two female leaders also mentioned that some senior male members sometimes showed their resistance of participation in services only because they were females (AF6, AF8). AF7 and AF10 also felt that senior members sometimes did not take their suggestions seriously. To sum up in AF9's statement:

> In every culture, men still want the ways they take. In reality, women still wait on men much more.

In other words, the present study has found that the glass-ceiling effects still exist in the Rotary Clubs in both Taiwan and the US. However, the glass-ceiling phenomenon is not as apparent as expected.

> RQ2. How can female leaders develop suitable and effective strategies for dealing with the male-dominated organizations in Taiwan and the US?

Based on the interview data, the respondents of this study have proposed several ways to cope with these situations.

Managing family role

Recent studies on female leadership have revealed that women have encountered the high personal costs of being leaders. Compared to their male counterparts, they tended to be single, separated or divorced, and if married, they were more likely to be childless or have fewer children (Charlesworth, 1997; Wajcman, 1998). Some previous researches on women's career development have also implicitly indicated that female managers sometimes need to choose either home or career (Cleveland et al., 2000). Among the 15 interviewees, nine of them are married, three are single, two are widowed, and only one is divorced. Most of them expressed that it is not easy to accomplish a balance between career and family, not to mention the Rotary Clubs. To manage their family role, they would first hold the membership until their children are grown up. In this study, the youngest child of the female leaders is eighteen years old. Then they tried to make conscious efforts to do it well with the support of the spouse/partner and prioritize strategically. Below is what some of them said:

> I think the family issue is certainly an issue for female leaders. There are family responsibilities you need to fulfill. I joined the club after I retired, so I can have more time to do what I really want to do (AF7).

> By having a home-based business, I can balance my family, my job, and my volunteer commitments. I have a separate suite of rooms for the office, and I know the work is always right there waiting to be done, but I will follow my priority to do things (AF11).

Managing deep-rooted male culture

As previously mentioned, several female participants experienced some level of gender discrimination. In their view, this type of discrimination is common in the society. Therefore, females need to work harder, prove their abilities in the male-dominated organizations, and take advantage of the lower expectations of women by impressing others with outstanding performance. Against such backdrop, TF6 believed that if women want to enter the men's world, they must be more progressive and active and make compromise of their female qualities. Only when you appear almost the same as men, can you enter their deep-rooted culture:

When I first became the president, I had to wipe out my female qualities to enter the male-dominated world. Male members have established some network relationships. Although I cannot drink much, I still try to go to those occasions. If I know where the males are going at night, I might go with them (interviewee TF8).

Some female leaders also have tried some ways to change the males' negative views toward them or the male-dominated culture, such as spending more time providing detailed information about projects and recruiting more female members. They felt that females are more often on boards and committees for Rotary. There are more women at leadership levels, and they are being recognized for their performances through the work they are doing:

> For the male members who resisted participating in our projects, I assumed they did not know what we were doing. Thus, I spent a lot of time promoting understanding and providing them with more information (AF7).

> To balance the male-dominated situation, I serve on committees each year and have chaired several of them. I actively recruit more female members into the club and have personally recruited several who have become long-term members (AF9).

> In the Rotary, I was one of the first women in the club, and I like to think that my leadership created awareness that women were definitely an asset to the club. I recruited younger members to the club, which had an average age of 70 when I joined Rotary. Today that average age is much lower (AF11).

Discussion and conclusion

Based on the data, the author found that Rotarians in Taiwan have higher scores in the cultural dimensions of collectivism, masculinity, and life-long relationships than their counterparts in the US. Moreover, the Rotarians in Taiwan reveal the highest score in life-long relationships and the lowest score in masculinity, while those in the US have the highest score in collectivism and lowest score in masculinity. Nonetheless, Taiwan's score in masculinity is still much higher than that of the US. The results are contradictory to Hofstede's (2001) study that the American culture is characterized by high masculinity and low collectivism.

The author argues that, based on previous scholarships (Ardichvili and Kuchinke, 2002; Kuchinke, 1999), Hofstede's cultural dimensions might not be stable over time. In addition, when specific samples are collected, they do not necessarily correspond with Hofstede's cultural-dimension scores. For instance, Gudykunst et al. (1992) did a cross-cultural study and found that when college students were sampled in Japan and the US, the Japanese students appeared more individualistic than their American counterparts. Gudykunst and Nishida (1986) also explained that both collectivism and individualism existed in all cultures, but one pattern was likely to predominate. Moreover, interviewee AF7 provides further proof:

> Leaders in Rotary Clubs have to be careful so as not to be too aggressive and demanding because every project in the club is voluntary teamwork.

Therefore, it is less likely for a leader to show high masculinity and individualism in Rotary Clubs due to the nature of the voluntary, teamwork-based projects.

As for leadership styles, there is significant difference between the Taiwanese and American Rotarians' expectations of female leaders to display transformational and laissez-faire. To be specific, Rotarians in both locations reveal the highest scores in their expectations of female leaders to display transformational leadership and the lowest scores in the expectations of female leaders to demonstrate the laissez-faire style. The US Rotarians, however, are somewhat more expectant of female leaders to display the transformational leadership style than those in Taiwan. With a statistically significant difference, the Taiwanese Rotarians have a much higher expectation of laissez-faire style than their American counterparts.

The reason lies in that organizations in highly masculine cultures often have goals that agree with the achieving role of the male, and as such, are almost always led by males with a setting established by men (Hofstede, 1980a). This trend leads to prejudice against female leaders and supports the general way of male dominance in most societies that men have a higher status than females. Consequently, men are not

expected to be led by females. According to the traditional Chinese cultural norms, the elderly males should be treated as natural rulers, and people at the lower rank, including females, should demonstrate obedience and submission (MacCormack, 1991). Therefore, for the Rotary Clubs in Taiwan, the more masculinity the members reveal, the more laissez-faire leadership they expect their female leaders to demonstrate because it is against the cultural norms for masculine members to be led by females. Meanwhile, the Rotarians' lowest scores in expecting female leaders to demonstrate the laissez-faire style in both countries can also be explained by the voluntary and teamwork features of the Rotary Clubs. As shown in the study, Rotarians have high collectivist values and tend to collaborate with their leaders and other members, so they cannot fulfill projects based on the self-directed ways in a laissez-faire style.

In this study, although the significant differences between Taiwan and the US seem to support that the major variables of cultural dimensions can explain the expected female leadership styles, they are not sufficient to fully explain the expected female leadership styles. Only 38 percent of the variance can be explained by these cultural factors in the expected laissez-faire leadership style, 19 percent of the variance in the expected transformational leadership style, and only 12 percent of the variance in the expected transactional leadership style. This could suggest two possibilities. First, the four cultural dimensions used in this study may not cover the whole national-level cultural dimensions relevant to leadership. For instance, according to Ralston et al. (1999), individualism and collectivism are unique constructs and should be split into individual continua. Second, some other factors such as language, political system, organizational culture, and past experience working under female leaders might have stronger impacts on female leadership than national culture. These factors, however, are beyond the scope of this study.

As for the reasons why more female leaders are not advancing to top positions in the Rotary, the researcher will analyze it from two perspectives: gender stereotypes and glass-ceiling effects.

Gender stereotypes

This study has found that there are three common stereotypes concerning female leaders in Rotary Clubs: regarding females as family caretakers rather than professional workers, discriminating females due to the male-dominant culture, and using different assessment criteria of male leaders and female leaders.

First, the ideas of women as family caretakers are still deeply rooted in most people's minds, so it is easy to imagine the pressure women suffer because of the gender difference. This situation is extremely obvious in the Taiwanese Rotary Clubs. For instance, most Taiwanese interviewees in this study feel that females should first take care of their families and should not be leaders unless their husbands agree with the idea or are willing to support this decision.

In addition, the present study has also found that, in the male-dominant settings such as Rotary, females' positions and advancement have been prohibited and blocked. According to Oakley (2000), "old boy's network" affects females' advancement. The culture of the "old boy's network" is specifically manifested in the male "brothers" culture, which obviously excludes the females and affects the advancement and development of females in many organizations. For instance, many male Rotarians in Taiwan will go to some social settings such as nightclubs for socializing after their Rotary meetings. In this case, females are not invited to these so-called "second meetings."

Finally, the study has also found that the assessment of female leaders is different from that of male leaders. That is, when females intend to show behaviors that traditionally belong to male leaders, they will violate the expectations of gender roles and thus cause negative evaluation. In addition, it is indicated in the past literature that situations and positions will influence people's attitudes toward males and females. When the positions of males are lower than those of females, there will be negative assessments of female superiors (Richeson and Ambady, 2001). Under the stereotypical gender expectation, the statuses of females are often regarded as lower than those of males. Therefore, when female leaders take charge of those so-called high-positioned males, it is hard for males to accept them, and these women are likely to receive harsh and negative evaluation.

The glass-ceiling effects

According to the results of the research, although many female leaders witness glass-ceiling effects in the Rotary Clubs, more than half of the female respondents do not feel the existence of gender stereotypes as obstacles to their advancement. It can be inferred that obstacles do exist with regard to female advancement in the Rotary Clubs, but they are not as apparent as expected. Furthermore, the unfavorable situation and gender stereotypes have improved in recent years.

As for the fact that there are not obvious glass-ceiling effects in the Rotary Clubs, the analysis of the interview transcripts offers some insights to such phenomenon. First, the Rotary is volunteer-based, and an individual Rotarian is encouraged to take a turn to serve as a president. Therefore, promotion based on gender is not allowed. Moreover, some female respondents in this study are from single sex clubs; gender within those clubs is of course not an issue for them. But for advancement to senior positions like the board member of the Rotary International, there are almost no female in those positions. Hence, most female leaders do not feel glass-ceiling effects because either they are not aware of this issue or they do not care about having higher positions than being a president in their own Rotary Clubs.

To sum up, this study has found that the female leaders in Rotary Clubs have witnessed increasing improvement in their career advancement in recent years. Although obstacles still exist in the females' advancement, it is no longer a serious phenomenon. However, most interviewees agree that female leaders still need to work harder and perform better than males. Moreover, they also feel that women have fewer chances to be promoted to district governor than men. Thus, the author would like to propose that the so-called "glass-ceiling effects" have been broken bit by bit; yet female leaders still need to "climb the Himalayas" to pass through a tortuous, demanding, and exhausting path in order to move upward.

As for the management strategies in male-dominated settings, the respondents of this study have proposed several ways to cope with these situations. First, to manage their family role, they would first hold the membership until their children are grown up. Second, to deal with gender discrimination in Rotary, some tend to be more progressive and active and to compromise their female qualities in order to enter deep-rooted male settings, and others have tried some strategies to change the males' negative views toward them. For instance, they may spend more time to provide detailed information about projects or their ideas in order to gain their involvement and commitment. In addition, these female leaders also try to recruit more female members and mentor them to become Rotary board or committee members.When there are more female Rotarians in leadership positions, female members may enjoy more equal treatment.

Apart from the strengths in this study, there are some limitations that readers are cautioned in interpreting the findings and conclusions in this study. First, although there are quite a number of research studies on cultural values and leadership styles, there are few studies on the topic of female leadership in international non-profit organizations in cross-cultural contexts. Therefore, lacking existing categories, this study can only analyze data based on general inferences or constructions about cultural values and female leadership in non-profit organizations. Second, some survey items in this study have shown minor problems. For instance, this study has encountered low reliability scores for several items in the survey questionnaire, so some items had to be deleted from the questionnaire and only three items used in the survey to measure cultural values and expected female leadership styles. In addition, due to the lack of financial support and pressed for time, this study is mainly based on probability samples from the two accessible Rotary districts, District 3510 in Taiwan and District 6600 in the US. After conveniently choosing the two Rotary districts, the author has randomly chosen a probability sample of 550 subjects from each district according to their respective membership list. Finally, the author also knows that in cross-cultural studies, it is often difficult to attribute observed mean differences between country scores to national cultural differences, because these differences may be products of methodological problems, such as lack of equivalence of meaning for measure and response bias (Yukl, 2010).

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Variables	α scores
Part A: Cultural dimensions	
Collectivism/individualism	0.662
Masculinity/femininity	0.625
Customs and value priorities	0.574
Life-long/work-related relationships	0.575
Part B: Leadership styles	
Transformational leadership	0.917
Transactional leadership	0.681
Laissez-faire leadership	0.781

Table I. Reliability for sub-scales values.

Table II. Regression models for the relationship between cultural dimensions and expectations of female leaders to use transformational leadership style in Taiwan and the US

Regressor	Model 1 B	Model 1 Beta	Model 2 B	Model 2 Beta	Model 3 B	Model 3 Beta
Intercept	1.826***	0.000	1.279***	0.000	1.044*	0.000
Collectivism	0.105*	0.113*	0.171**	0.184**	0.157*	0.169*
Masculinity	−0.009	−0.012	0.036	0.047	0.097	0.127
Customs	0.097	0.108	0.051	0.057	0.090	0.101
Life-long relationships	0.369***	0.397***	0.354***	0.385***	0.349***	0.380***
Taiwan (Taiwan = 1; US = 0)	−0.423***	−0.402***	−0.324*	−0.311*	0.235	0.226
Age			0.003	0.070	0.002	0.053
Female			0.153	0.121	0.168	0.133
Education (less than a college degree is the reference group)						
Bachelor			−0.021	−0.020	−0.031	−0.030
MAPHD			−0.063	−0.059	−0.081	−0.075
Married			0.025	0.016	0.015	0.015
President			0.038	0.036	0.041	0.041
Managerial			0.078	0.073	0.094	0.094
Religion (neither Christian nor Buddhist is the reference group)						
Christianity			0.103	0.099	0.124	0.119
Buddhism			−0.015	−0.014	−0.016	−0.015
Interaction terms						
Taiwan*Collectivism					0.008	0.029
Taiwan*Masculinity					−0.201*	−0.551*
Taiwan*Customs					−0.050	−0.189
Taiwan*Long-term relationship					0.036	0.138
RSS	17.317		20.81		21.773	
MSE	0.226		0.206		0.206	
F	15.294***		6.302***		5.288***	
R^2	0.203		0.275		0.288	
Adjusted R^2	0.189		0.231		0.233	

Notes: $^*p < 0.05$; $^{**}p < 0.01$; $^{***}p < 0.001$

Regressor	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	B	Beta	B	Beta	B	Beta
Intercept	2.114***	0.000	1.729***	0.000	1.801***	0.000
Collectivism	0.087	0.103	0.088	0.103	0.040	0.047
Masculinity	−0.099*	−0.139*	−0.089*	−0.128*	−0.077	−0.110
Customs	0.240***	0.291***	0.221***	0.272***	0.245**	0.301**
Life-long relationships	0.151**	0.177**	0.156**	0.186**	0.147*	0.176*
Taiwan (Taiwan = 1; US = 0)	−0.178**	−0.185**	0.010	0.011	−0.307	−0.324
Age			0.000	0.011	0.000	0.012
Female			0.132	0.114	0.145	0.125
Education (less than a college degree is the reference group)						
Bachelor			−0.122	−0.129	−0.108	−0.115
MAPHID			−0.084	−0.086	−0.074	−0.075
Married			0.031	0.022	0.023	0.016
President			0.040	0.042	0.041	0.043
Managerial			0.005	0.005	0.010	0.010
Religion (neither Christian nor Buddhist is the reference group)						
Christianity			0.226*	0.238*	0.235*	0.247*
Buddhism			0.090	0.089	0.073	0.072
Interaction terms						
Taiwan*Collectivism					0.134	0.555
Taiwan*Masculinity					−0.011	−0.034
Taiwan*Customs					−0.096	−0.402
Taiwan*Long-term relationship					0.055	0.229
RSS	9.259		10.638		11.035	
MSE	0.206		0.197		0.198	
F	8.994***		3.381***		2.785***	
R^2	0.130		0.169		0.175	
Adjusted R^2	0.116		0.119		0.112	

Notes: $^*p < 0.05$; $^{**}p < 0.01$; $^{***}p < 0.001$

Table III. Regression models for the relationship between cultural dimensions and expectations of female leaders to use transactional leadership style in Taiwan and the US

Regressor	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	B	Beta	B	Beta	B	Beta
Intercept	1.013**	0.000	1.686***	0.000	2.203***	0.000
Collectivism	0.100	0.074	0.094	0.068	−0.015	−0.011
Masculinity	0.147**	0.129**	0.122*	0.107*	0.062	0.054
Customs	0.169*	0.129*	0.120	0.090	0.042	0.032
Life-long Relationships	−0.064	−0.047	−0.069	−0.050	0.052	0.038
Taiwan (Taiwan = 1; US = 0)	0.739***	0.483***	0.717***	0.463***	−0.373	−0.241
Age			−0.001	−0.015	0.000	−0.006
Female			−0.144	−0.76	−0.162	−0.086
Education (less than a college degree is the reference group)						
Bachelor			−0.059	−0.038	−0.025	−0.016
MAPHD			0.046	0.029	0.080	0.050
Married			−0.027	−0.011	−0.025	−0.011
President			−0.036	−0.023	−0.048	−0.031
Managerial			−0.153	−0.097	−0.179*	−0.113*
Religion (neither Christian nor Buddhist is the reference group)						
Christianity			−0.070	−0.045	−0.122	−0.079
Buddhism			0.035	0.021	0.013	0.008
Interaction terms						
Taiwan*Collectivism					0.290	0.739
Taiwan*Masculinity					0.229	0.421
Taiwan*Customs					0.171	0.437
Taiwan*Long-term relationship					−0.345*	−0.889*
RSS	68.865		68.447		72.485	
MSE	0.367		0.372		0.362	
F	37.522***		11.497***		10.002***	
R^2	0.384		0.409		0.433	
Adjusted R^2	0.374		0.373		0.390	

Notes: *$p < 0.05$; **$p < 0.01$; ***$p < 0.001$

Table IV. Regression models for the relationship between cultural dimensions and expectations of female leaders to use laissez-faire leadership style in Taiwan and the US