



# ADVANCING WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

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*Full Length Research Paper*

## Study of Students' Perceptions of Women in Management: 1988-2018

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(Posthumous acknowledgement: Dr. Frank died prior to publishing this paper. This is one of the last works of her)

**Replicates a study completed 30-years before regarding college students' perceptions of women in management. Questions include descriptions on semantic differential scales of male/female managers, personal preferences for a boss, and estimates on when management equality would be achieved by women. Factor analysis in 2018 defined the same three factors as in 1988. Male managers' factor scores are higher on "Managerial Behavior," female managers higher on "Consideration," and no significant difference for "Initiation of Structure" in both studies. When asked the preferred boss of a mixed-gender group, women are more likely to select a man, although this preference has decreased. There was a significant increase for females to choose a woman manager as their personal boss preference. Results indicate little change in the stereotypical description of a woman manager, and that current female students have the "Think manager - Think male" attitude. There is also the perception that in the population at-large, it is not yet acceptable for women to pursue a managerial career when married with children. However, men have significantly increased their personal acceptance of career women.**

**Keywords:** woman in management, college student, perception of managers

In 2018 women made up 46.9% of the labor force. And yet, looking at the S&P 500 companies 36.9% are first/mid-level managers, 26.5% senior level, 21.2% hold board seats, and only 5% were CEO (Catalyst, 2019). Apparently, there is an operating bias serving as a glass ceiling that is blocking a greater proportion of women to move up the managerial ranks. Although there may be several reasons for this disparate impact (e.g., stepping out of their careers for a period of time, assignments that are dead ends) women are not perceived as having the "right stuff" to be effective managers. What seems to be operating is a stereotype of women that is not congruent with the characteristics believed to make a successful manager.

This article reports the comparison of the results of survey data in 1988 with the replication using the same survey instrument in 2018. The principal objective is to examine changes in the description of male and female managers in the 30-year period made by undergraduate business majors.

There is an abundance of research examining descriptions of male and female managers starting with V.E. Schein in 1973 when she developed the Schein Descriptive Index (SDI) Her findings showed that descriptions of men and managers were more similar than the descriptions of women and managers. In her replication in 1975, she used middle-level managers as her focus. Once again, the description of males and middle-level managers were more alike than descriptions of women and middle managers.

Research suggests that these stereotypes are not changing over time (Bajdo, 2005; Massengill & DiMarco, 1979; Noris & Wylie, 1995; Schein et al., 1989; Tomkiewicz & Adeyemi Bello, 1995). Dubno (1985) found no significant changes over an eight-year period. Powell et al. (2002, 1989) studied managerial stereotypes among students for almost three decades. Respondents were asked to describe good managers by rating the importance of a number of personality traits. The results found in 2002 were not much different from the results found in 1979 and 1989. Students defined good leadership with masculine characteristics and believed that female traits were irrelevant or even harmful for good leadership. Huckle (1983) also provided evidence that traditional sex-role expectations still existed.

This current research represents a 30-year longitudinal investigation (1988 to 2018) to examine the extent gender stereotypes and perceptions of managers have changed. The methodology and results from the earlier study were published in *Sex Roles* (Frank, 1988) and were used as the basis for this replication.

The original research questions were:

- 1) To what extent do college students perceive that women are accepted as managers?
- 2) What are the significant differences, if any, in descriptions of male and female managers?

3) What are the gender preferences for bosses, if any, when given the choice to choose for homogeneous and mixed gendered groups?

The objective of the current study is to compare the results of the two investigations conducted three decades apart regarding college students' perceptions and attitudes towards women in management. Three new research questions have been formulated:

- 1) To what extent have college students' perceptions changed regarding the level of acceptance of women as managers?
- 2) How have descriptions of male and female managers been modified over this 30-year period?
- 3) How have gender preferences for bosses changed for respondents?

## Methods

### Subjects

**1988.** Respondents were all upper-level business undergraduates enrolled in management courses at Southern Connecticut State University and at Baruch College – The City University of New York during the 1986 -1987 academic year.

**2018.** Students in upper-level undergraduate business courses at Southern Connecticut State University were requested to complete the attitude survey on a voluntary basis. Students were told the survey link would be found online in the weekly course folder in Blackboard Learn 9. To encourage participation, the announcement noted the drawing of 15 Target \$10 gift cards.

The demographic sections of both instruments were the same with questions regarding gender, age, marital status, ethnic group, and if they had ever worked for a female boss.

### Survey Instrument

**1988.** The hard copy survey was six pages long and required about 25 minutes to complete. The majority of the questions were answered on a 10-point Likert scale, where the lower numbers represented positive responses, i.e., 1 = Definitely Yes vs 10 = Definitely No. The survey was distributed with a very short verbal explanation encouraging students to answer all the questions. The written instruction read:

We would like to know more about your attitudes and perceptions of women in management. Please answer the questions indicating the first response that comes to mind.

The instructions emphasized first impressions in an attempt to discourage students from making studied responses that they felt were socially acceptable rather than their own feelings. Students physically wrote in or circled their answers. The completed surveys were manually entered into a database.

**2018.** The online survey was constructed within the software program "SurveyGizmo." The majority of the questions were again answered on a 10-point Likert scale. Respondents just had to click on the numbered scale points to indicate their responses.

The instructions read:

"We would like to know more about your attitudes and perceptions of women in management. Please answer the questions indicating the first response that comes to mind. At the end of the survey, there will be an opportunity to send in your email address to enter a raffle for fifteen \$10 Target gift cards. The survey should not take more than 10 minutes to complete. Thank you for your participation!"

### Attitudes Towards Career Women

The first question on both surveys, "How acceptable do you feel it is for a woman to pursue her own career, even if she is married and has a family?" was anchored with 1=Definitely Yes, and 10 = Definitely No. A follow-up question repeated the same wording with subjects projecting how acceptable it was to "Others."

A third question investigated, "Are female executives presently accepted as the equals of male executives?" The follow-up question, "In how many years do you predict it will take before management equality for women is achieved?" had different formats for recording answers. In 1988, respondents were asked to enter a number in a blank space. In 2018, to avoid any hand data entry, the responses were fixed alternatives: Already, Never and in 10, 20, or 50 years.

### Gender Preferences for Bosses

Both surveys asked students, "If you were forced to choose, whom would you prefer as your boss?" There were only the two-gender choices as alternatives in order to force a choice, rather than the socially acceptable option, "doesn't matter." The follow-up question was, "How significant is the boss's gender to your job satisfaction?"

To further investigate students' gender choices for a boss, subjects were given three situations where they were asked to select who the preferred boss would be. The three groups were an all-male group, an all-female group, and a mixed-gender group. The question indicated that the credentials of the male and female candidates were equal, and the only difference was their gender.

### Descriptions of Male and Female Managers

In both investigations, subjects were presented with two sets of 20 semantic differential scales upon which to describe a male, and then a female manager. Responses were made on a 10-point scale. The instructions were simple: "Describe a male (female) manager."

## Results

### Sample

**1988.** The survey was distributed to 210 students during class. The administration resulted in 202 usable surveys (females n =103; males n = 99). The average age was 23.7 years for males and 24.6 years for females. The racial breakdown was as follows: White, 77%; Black, 14%; Hispanic, 4%; Asian, 4%; Other, 1%.

Marital status was single 82%; married, 15%; divorced 3%. Not having had a female boss was reported by 25% of the females, and 35% of the males.

**2018.** A total of 280 upperclassmen participated in the online survey with 270 being considered usable (females n= 158; males n=112). The racial breakdown was as follows: White, 65%; Black, 15%, Hispanic, 12%; Asian, 5%; Other 3%. Unlike the earlier study where subjects wrote in their age, this group was asked to click-on which interval their age fell in. This sample was younger, with an average age of approximately 22 years old. Only 6% indicated they were married, with 4% indicating divorced. In this group, only 8% of the men and women reported not having experience with a woman as a boss.

**Attitudes Towards Career Women**

**1988/2018 Personal Acceptance.** The response to, “How acceptable do you feel it is for a woman to pursue her own career, even if she is married and has children?” has moved in a positive approval direction. Male students in 1988 were significantly less accepting of the dual role than the female students (Women = 2.38, Men = 2.97;  $t = 2.16, p < .05$ ). Although there was no significant difference between genders in the 2018 sample (Women = 1.57, Men = 1.60), the results demonstrated a significantly greater degree ( $t = 3.51, p < .001$ ) of personal acceptance over the 30-year period for both genders

**1988/2018 “Others” Acceptance.** Women in 1988 reported a significantly more negative perception regarding the acceptance of “Others” to a career woman than male students (Men = 6.02, Women = 6.91,  $t = 2.71, p < .01$ ). In 2018, women also reported less acceptance by “Others” of career women than the men reported (Males = 3.51, Women = 4.64,  $p < .001$ ). For the total sample in 2018, the contrast between personal acceptance and the perception of society’s acceptance was extreme ( $t = 14.8, p < .0001$ ).

**Boss Preference**

**1988.** To the question, “If you were forced to choose, whom would you prefer for your boss?” 60% of the men checked a preference for a male boss ( $z = 2.00, p < .05$ ); 67% of the women also checked a male boss preference ( $z = 3.40, p < .001$ ). Tests of significance were based on a  $p = .5$  hypothesized preference for each gender.

Men with no working experience with a woman boss reported that the boss’s gender would be a significant factor in determining their job satisfaction compared to males who had experience with a female boss. (experience = 8.11 n = 64; no experience = 6.69, n = 33;  $t = 2.48, p < .01$ ).

**2018.** Women preferred a female boss 79% of the time, while 66% of males showed a preference for a male boss. Against the null hypothesis of  $p = .5$ , both groups showed a significant tendency to choose a boss of the congruent gender ( $z < .0001$ ).

Bosses’ gender was less of an issue for male subjects than for the females, although both minimized gender importance to their

job satisfaction. (Females = 7.51, Males = 8.18,  $t = 2.20, p < .05$ ) For males who reported never having a woman boss (n=18), there was no significant difference in their response from males who had worked for a woman.

**1988.** Table 1 presents the choices the sample chose as the boss for the three configured groups. In 1988 male managers were chosen by both male and female students as the overwhelming ( $p < .001$ ) choice of an all-male group and of a mixed workgroup. Male respondents were inclined to predict a greater preference for a female manager in an all-female workgroup than female respondents, although this difference reached only  $p < .10$  level of significance.

**Table 1**  
*Management Gender Preference (%)*

Respondents'	All Male Group			
	Males	Males	Females	Females
Preference	1*	2**	1*	2**
Male Boss	93	95	93	90
Female Boss	7	5	7	10
	All Female Group			
	Males	Males	Females	Females
	1	2	1	2
Male Boss	39	29	54	29
Female Boss	61	71	46	71
	Mixed Group			
	Males	Males	Females	Females
	1	2	1	2
Male Boss	82	62	81	75
Female Boss	18	38	19	25

\*1988

\*\* 2018

**2018.** Both genders thought for the homogeneous groups, a similar sex boss would be the preferred choice. In the mixed group, 75% of female subjects chose a man, while male subjects chose a man 62% of the time which is significant (chi sq. = 4.614,  $p < .05$ ). Table 1 indicates respondents’ preferences for the three different groups.

**Equality in the Workplace**

**1988.** The question, “In how many years do you predict it will take before management equality for women is achieved?” was an open question. Men felt it was going to take on the average 19.4 years, while women predicted an average of 14.0 years. These responses were treated purely as descriptive of students’ present perceptions, with no further statistical test made.

**2018.** Respondents that selected “Never” as their answer to the question, showed a significant difference between the genders. Only 7% of males indicated it would not happen; 15% of women

perceived the future as no prospect of equality ( $p < .05$ ). Examining respondents who indicated equality has already been reached, 19% of males responded that way, while only 7% of females reported so positively ( $p < .05$ ). The most frequent choice, 44% of the total sample, was that equality would be reached in 10 years.

**1988.** The question, “Are female executives presently accepted as the equals of male executives?” demonstrated a significant difference between the genders in the way reality was perceived in the workplace in both years. Where “1” was “Definitely Yes,”

women in 1988 reported significantly more negative perceptions regarding a lack of acceptance than men did (Men = 6.02; Women = 6.91;  $t = 2.71, p < .01$ ).

**2018.** The mean for females was 6.91, while men were more optimistic with a mean of 4.92 ( $t = 5.882, p < .0001$ ).

### Descriptions of Male and Female Managers

Factor analysis of the 20 descriptive scales using varimax rotation generated three factors (eigenvalues  $> 1.0$ ). Table 2 presents the mean factor scores from both samples.

**Table 2**  
*Factor Scores*

Male Respondents		Managerial Behavior	Considerations	Initiation of Structure
1988	Male Managers	10.20 (1.67)	9.25 (1.29)	10.50 (1.06)
	Female Managers	9.26 (1.27)	10.01 (1.29)	10.27 (1.53)
2018	Male Managers	29.61 (10.22)	20.79 (8.67)	23.40 (8.7)
	Female Managers	29.81 (11.73)	27.17 (8.18)	24.90 (11.1)
Female Respondents				
1988	Male Managers	9.90 (1.30)	8.90 (1.30)	10.51 (1.32)
	Female Managers	9.79 (1.27)	10.15 (1.37)	10.09 (1.63)
2018	Male Managers	34.19 (9.45)	25.17 (6.93)	26.18 (8.18)
	Female Managers	29.22 (10.99)	29.47 (7.16)	27.9 (7.19)

**1988/2018.** The first factor, “Management Behaviors” was weighted heavily with the scales anchored with the terms: leader, effective, competent, fast, strong, decisive, knowledgeable, and active.

The second factor, “Consideration,” contained the scales anchored with such terms as open, rewarding, friendly, understanding, communicative, and soft.

The third factor, “Initiation of Structure,” contained the descriptors lenient, democratic, people-oriented, happy, family-oriented, and easy. This factor seems to describe the type of team characteristics or the type of atmosphere in the group the manager leads and is a by-product of their leadership style.

**1988.** Male students rate male managers significantly higher than female managers on Managerial Behaviors ( $t = 5.25, p < .001$ ) and significantly lower than women managers on

Consideration ( $t = 4.00, p < .001$ ) There was no statistically significant difference in the factor score for Initiation of Structure.

Female respondents scored female managers significantly higher on Consideration ( $t = 6.67, p < .001$ ) than male managers, and lower on Initiation of Structure ( $t = 1.98, p < .05$ ) There was no significant difference in the Managerial Behavior factor.

Comparing factor scores across genders, male students scored male managers higher but not significantly higher on Managerial Behaviors ( $t = 1.65, p < .10$ ) than the ratings by female students. They also scored male managers significantly higher on Consideration ( $t = 1.97, p < .05$ ) There was no significant difference across genders in the mean score for Initiation of Structure

**2018.** Male respondents described female managers higher in Consideration ( $p < .0001$ ) The other factors were not significant.

Women scored male managers higher on Managerial Behavior ( $p < .001$ ), and female managers higher in Consideration ( $p < .001$ ). There was no significant difference regarding Initiation of Structure.

Comparing the responses of male and female students, women rated male managers higher in Managerial Behavior ( $p < .001$ ), lower in Consideration ( $p < .0001$ ), and lower in Initiation of Structure ( $p < .05$ ).

Comparing the responses of male and female students, women described female managers higher in Consideration than male respondents ( $p < .05$ ) and also higher on Initiation of Structure ( $p < .05$ ). There was no significant difference in the mean factor score for Managerial Behavior.

**1988.** Comparing male students' description of the typical male and female manager, the male manager is described as significantly stronger ( $p < .001$ ), business-oriented ( $p < .001$ ), decisive ( $p < .001$ ), demanding ( $p < .001$ ), leader ( $p < .001$ ), effective ( $p < .01$ ), task-oriented ( $p < .01$ ), distant ( $p < .01$ ), closed ( $p < .01$ ), active ( $p < .05$ ), knowledgeable ( $p < .05$ ), punishing ( $p < .05$ ), and unreasonable ( $p < .05$ ).

Looking at the women's description of both, female students described the woman manager to be more family-oriented ( $p < .001$ ), communicative ( $p < .001$ ) people-oriented ( $p < .001$ ), soft ( $p < .001$ ) friendly ( $p < .001$ ), understanding ( $p < .001$ ), open ( $p < .001$ ), democratic ( $p < .001$ ), competent ( $p < .01$ )

rewarding ( $p < .01$ ) lenient ( $p < .05$ ), weak ( $p < .05$ ) and knowledgeable ( $p < .05$ ) than male managers.

Comparing students' descriptions of female managers, males portrayed female managers as more unsure ( $p < .001$ ), knows-nothing ( $p < .005$ ), incompetent ( $p < .05$ ), weak ( $p < .05$ ), ineffective ( $p < .05$ ), closed ( $p < .05$ ), and more of a follower ( $p < .10$ ).

**2018.** Male subjects described female managers as weaker ( $p < .001$ ), follower ( $p < .001$ ), family-oriented ( $p < .0001$ ), soft, ( $p < .001$ ), rewarding ( $p < .001$ ), democratic ( $p < .05$ ), unsure ( $p < .01$ ), friendly ( $p < .001$ ), open ( $p < .0001$ ), communicative ( $p < .01$ ), people-oriented ( $p < .01$ ), and more understanding ( $p < .01$ ).

Comparing women's descriptions of male and female managers, women managers are scaled as more competent ( $p < .01$ ), fast ( $p < .05$ ), happy ( $p < .0001$ ), family-oriented ( $p < .0001$ ), soft ( $p < .0001$ ), rewarding ( $p < .0001$ ), democratic ( $p < .0001$ ), lenient ( $p < .01$ ), friendly ( $p < .0001$ ), open ( $p < .0001$ ), communicative ( $p < .0001$ ), knowledgeable ( $p < .001$ ), people-oriented ( $p < .01$ ), and understanding ( $p < .0001$ ) than male managers.

Using responses from the total sample ( $n=270$ ) comparing male vs female managers on the individual scales, female managers are weak ( $p < .001$ ), happy ( $p < .0001$ ) follower ( $p < .05$ ), family-oriented ( $p < .0001$ ), soft ( $p < .0001$ ), rewarding ( $p < .0001$ ), democratic ( $p < .0001$ ), unsure ( $p < .01$ ), and more lenient ( $p < .01$ ).

Tables 4 and 5 present the descriptors that were significant across at least three sets of data.

**Table 3**  
*Descriptive Means*

	*Women=158		*Men=112		**Women=103		**Men=99	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Competent -Incompetent	3.78	3.20	3.16	3.40	2.72	2.23	2.50	2.60
s.d.	1.83	2.01	1.77	2.00	1.19	1.08	1.16	1.25
Slow-Fast	6.70	7.18	7.09	6.67	5.03	4.99	5.09	4.89
	2.17	2.02	2.22	2.20	1.2	1.39	1.03	1.22
Strong-Weak	3.39	3.72	3.10	3.91	2.70	3.14	2.84	3.55
	1.87	2.15	1.88	1.93	1.36	1.34	1.41	1.33
Difficult-Easy	4.80	4.77	4.99	5.15	3.59	3.72	3.68	3.78
	2.06	2.02	2.07	2.25	1.3	1.4	1.11	1.47
Serious-Happy	4.46	5.58	4.17	5.05	3.43	3.49	3.35	3.27
	2.18	2.26	1.91	2.35	1.38	1.59	1.30	1.48
Leader-Follower	3.51	3.52	2.91	3.85	2.48	2.62	2.29	2.93
	2.07	2.04	1.84	2.12	1.45	1.17	1.31	1.42
Active-Passive	4.01	3.62	3.57	3.88	2.85	2.69	2.26	2.70
	2.18	2.01	1.85	2.21	1.50	1.37	1.18	1.38
Business-Family	3.63	5.28	3.51	4.94	2.50	3.27	2.47	3.51

	1.88	2.34	1.81	2.38	1.39	1.55	1.33	1.62
Effective-Ineffective	3.74	3.47	3.35	3.71	2.72	2.51	2.38	2.89
	1.83	1.98	1.94	2.07	1.26	1.20	1.16	1.22
Soft-Hard	6.67	5.18	6.79	5.21	4.98	4.08	4.95	3.94
	2.19	2.04	1.85	2.29	1.26	1.37	1.20	1.35
Rewarding-Punishing	5.31	4.08	5.20	4.16	3.74	3.21	3.64	3.18
	2.03	1.98	1.94	2.25	1.37	1.37	1.35	1.31
Autocratic-Democratic	4.95	5.90	5.08	5.68	3.51	4.33	3.84	4.01
	2.03	2.14	2.01	2.24	1.34	1.47	1.23	1.44
Decisive-Unsure	3.76	3.97	3.42	4.16	2.58	2.71	2.50	3.37
	1.99	2.07	1.91	2.26	1.26	1.36	1.18	1.53
Demanding-Lenient	4.04	4.71	4.16	4.50	2.85	3.22	2.72	3.42
	2.17	2.10	2.18	2.24	1.22	1.41	1.05	1.37
Friendly-Distant	5.04	3.88	4.63	3.69	3.53	2.73	3.52	2.97
	2.05	2.09	2.03	1.96	1.30	1.33	1.31	1.26
Open-Closed	5.48	3.97	5.17	3.66	4.03	2.70	3.64	3.10
	2.29	1.90	2.15	2.03	1.54	1.42	1.36	1.40
Communicative-Secretive	4.84	3.52	4.53	3.74	3.58	2.53	2.88	2.84
	1.89	1.94	2.11	2.14	1.81	1.45	1.43	1.42
Knowledgeable-Knows Nothing	3.69	3.00	3.42	3.56	2.48	2.10	2.26	2.62
	1.89	1.77	1.95	2.16	1.27	1.07	1.15	1.37
Task-oriented-People-oriented	4.31	4.31	3.78	4.66	3.12	3.97	3.25	3.83
	2.16	2.16	2.05	2.66	1.63	1.37	1.51	1.59
Understanding-Unreasonable	5.03	5.03	4.20	3.50	3.73	2.71	3.31	2.93
	2.14	2.14	2.11	2.08	1.47	1.33	1.31	1.27

\*2018

\*\*1988

**Table 4**

*Significant Descriptors of Male Bosses*

Men		Women	
1988	2018	1988	2018
Male Boss	Male Boss	Male Boss	Male Boss
strong	strong		
business- oriented	business-oriented	business-oriented	business- oriented
hard		hard	hard
decisive	decisive		
demanding		demanding	demanding
leader	leader		
effective			
task-oriented	task-oriented	task-oriented	task-oriented
distant	distant		
closed	closed	closed	closed
active			
knowledgeable		knowledgeable	knows nothing
punishing	punishing	punishing	punishing

unreasonable	unreasonable	unreasonable	unreasonable
	autocratic	autocratic	autocratic
	serious		serious
	secretive	secretive	secretive
		distant	distant
		incompetent	incompetent
		strong	
			slower

**Table 5**  
*Significant Descriptors of Female Bosses*

Men		Women	
1988	2018	1988	2018
Female Boss	Female Boss	Female Boss	Female Boss
weak	weak		
follower	follower		
	family-oriented	family-oriented	family-oriented
	soft	soft	soft
	rewarding	rewarding	rewarding
	democratic	democratic	democratic
unsure	unsure		
	friendly	friendly	friendly
closed	open		open
	communicative	communicative	communicative
	people-oriented	people-oriented	people-oriented
	understanding		understanding
incompetent		competent	competent
			faster
			happy
		lenient	lenient
knows nothing		knowledgeable	knowledgeable
ineffective			
		weak	

## Discussion

### Discussion of the Sample

The major difference in the sample profile was an increase from 4% Hispanic to 12%. This reflects that the fastest-growing ethnic group in Connecticut is Hispanic.

### Attitudes Towards Career Women

The comparison of the first two questions on both surveys is a key indicator that there has been a significant change in male attitudes. Some change would be expected since more women have entered the management ranks over the three decades. In

terms of personal acceptance, we see a very significant positive move towards acceptance of a wife/mother pursuing a career over the 30-year period. With the often-necessary financial reliance on two-paycheck families, this result could have been expected.

What was not expected was the strong perception that “Others” were not as accepting of career women as the respondents. Looking at the total sample, the discrepancy between self-accepting and “Others” reached  $p < .0001$  significance. If the perception is that society does not support working women,



there may be a tendency not to select a woman even if it runs contrary to their own feelings on the matter. This could be a factor in the low participation rate of women in the higher level of management positions.

Notably, women are even more negative in their perceptions of women's acceptance in the later study. Certainly, this point of view may demoralize young women from aggressively pursuing advancement. This supports the results in the next question.

### **Equality in the Workplace**

**1988.** Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 forbids discrimination in the workplace. That was the law of the land for 24 years when the first study was conducted. The students at that time felt it would take about another 20 years to make women whole. Certainly, the quest for gender equality is going far more slowly than the estimates given in 1988.

**2018.** With this second study, 30 years later, only 19% of the males and 7% of the females feel the struggle has been won. An estimate of another 10 years was the majority response. If that turns out to be correct, it will mean it has taken society 54 years to deal with an issue that affects 51% of the population. Having said that, 15% of the university female students sampled here still don't think equality will ever happen. This is especially true if the operating condition is that "Others" in general don't accept professional married women.

### **Gender Preferences for Boss**

**1988/2018.** In 1988, male bosses were checked 60% of the time as the personal preference of male respondents. In 2018, this preference rose to 66%. However, the big difference was in the women's response. In 1988, 33% of the women preferred a woman, while in 2018 women indicated a 79% preference for a woman. As the percentage of women in the workforce has increased in 30 years, more of these students have experienced working or observing women in management and this familiarity makes it more likely a woman would be a reasonable choice.

All respondents in both studies indicated a definite preference (< 90%) for gender congruence with a male boss in an all-male group. This is true as well in both studies where the majority of males (61%, 71%) noted that the preferred boss of an all-female group was another woman. This support was only 54% from female respondents in 1988 i.e., a greater percentage of men backed a female boss for an all-female group than women did. But not so in 2018 where 71% of the females preferred a woman boss in an all-women's group. Although this was a meaningful shift in support, it only tied the percentage chosen by men. One must wonder why women wouldn't support a woman in almost any management situation especially when it is noted her qualifications were the same as the men to the same degree, over 90% as they did a male boss with a male group.

The lack of support for women in management positions by other women is reflected in the preference stated for the mixed-configured group. The male boss was the overwhelming preference for the mixed group in all four sets of findings. One

positive result is that in 2018 a greater percentage chose a woman, but it was weak support. In fact, in 2018, 38% of male respondents selected a preference for a woman while it was only 25% from the women. Women don't seem to go out of their way to support women in management positions, even when the position is imaginary on paper.

### **Description of Male and Female Managers**

**1988.** The factor component, Managerial Behavior contains descriptors that most would agree are a major factor in success as a manager i.e., leader, effective, task-oriented. Male respondents rated male managers significantly higher on this factor ( $p < .0001$ ) than female managers. On Consideration (lenient, friendly, soft) female managers were significantly higher ( $p < .0001$ ). There was no significant difference in the Initiation of Structure factor (happy, family-oriented, easy)

There was no significant difference in the Managerial Behavior factor for female respondents. They did rate female managers higher in Consideration ( $p < .0001$ ). There was no difference in Initiation of Structure.

**2018.** Male respondents rated female managers significantly higher in Consideration ( $p < .0001$ ). There were no significant differences with the other two factors. A key finding here is that the significant difference in 1988 on the Managerial Behavior factor no longer exists.

Female Respondents describe male managers higher in Managerial Behavior ( $p < .001$ ). Women are significantly higher in Consideration ( $p < .0001$ ). There was no significant difference in Initiation of Structure.

Female students appear to have even a more positive view of men as managers than male students. (Men rated men and women the same on Managerial Behavior). This is probably why a greater percentage of female students selected a male manager for the mixed-gender group – they really believe men are better managers than women.

**1988/2018.** Looking at the traits that reached significance on at least three of the four description sets, there is a strong level of agreement, especially for male managers. The words used to describe men are business-oriented, hard, task-oriented, closed, unreasonable, demanding, punishing, autocratic and secretive. Respondents appear to be describing the stereotypical "is all-business" individual who wants the job done, and cares little if s/he is liked by subordinates

The scales that were found in common for a female manager coincides with the stereotypical description often used for women. The frequent descriptors are family-oriented, friendly, people-oriented, soft, rewarding democratic, and communicative. Certainly, relevant terms for a social work type job, but not traits often used to describe an executive at any level.

### **Conclusion**

The essential conclusion from this research is that the stereotypical perceptions that existed 30 years ago seem to be

undergoing change, but not necessarily in the same direction. One important change is male respondents in 2018 did not see a significant difference in their Managerial Behavior factor scores between the genders as they did in 1988. Women managers are described as having a similar set of managerial characteristics as the descriptions of male managers. Results from Duehr and Bono (2006) also revealed a considerable change in male managers' views of women over the past 30 years, as evidenced by "greater congruence between their perceptions of women and successful managers and stronger endorsement of agentic and task-oriented leadership characteristics for women." This change bodes well for women to be selected by men to move up the management ladder.

There was also a change in the Managerial Behavior score for men as rated by female students. Female subjects in 2018, evaluated men with significantly higher Managerial Behavior factor scores when there was no significant difference in 1988. These young female college students perceive men demonstrating more of the characteristics generally attached to successful managers. In other words, "Think manager-Think men." This change foretells that women may not select a woman for a management vacancy if there is a male with similar credentials. This is especially true if women believe men having ingrained in their behavioral domain more of what a successful manager must possess. This point of view is probably the basis of why 75% of these same women chose a male boss for the mixed-gender group. Male respondents chose a woman significantly more often.

On the positive side, 12% more women indicated a personal preference for a female boss in 2018 than in 1988, although bosses' gender seems not to be a factor in job satisfaction.

Female students in 2018 don't perceive a level playing field in obtaining managerial positions. This in spite of 50 years of Affirmative Action, and the current acknowledgment that diversity is a component of organizational success. Even more disheartening is the fact that there is a portion of young females who don't believe women will ever have equality. In a way, this may be a product of their perception that the outside world does not approve of a female pursuing a career when they are married and have children. This does correspond to the findings of Carlson et al (2006) that women express notably less faith that complete acceptance is in the offing. And that men's perceptions are overly rosy.

A question arises with the significant results that these 2018 men are more accepting of a career woman than in 1988. If they are so accepting, why are they so negative about their friends and acquaintances, in other words, "Others" attitudes? One has to wonder would they really support their wife's career if they were feeling peer pressure that the place for a woman is home taking care of the kids. This might be the case of responding with the socially acceptable or politically expedient response when they are answering for themselves.

The evidence points to the fact that the 2018 female students believe males possess more of the traits seen in successful managers than they do. The important question is why the deterioration of managerial self-image in these 30 years. In 1988, women did not describe male managers significantly higher on the Managerial Behavior factor. This is a significant finding of this study. Maybe the unconscious rationale is "we are not equal now, nor may we ever be and the reason for that is we are not as good as men." What they do have is high scores in Consideration. Consideration probably has more of a role in developing a transformational leadership style than the transactional Managerial Behavior traits. Women apparently don't see this natural advantage.

The terms used to describe male managers, the higher Managerial Behavior score, and the fact female respondents more often selected a male boss for a mixed-gender group indicates that females supporting other females for higher-level corporate positions will be infrequent. Most of the job growth probably will happen in female-dominated jobs, where the adjectives used in the Consideration factor to describe women managers are more appropriate for positions in fields related to teaching and caring.

The results of this study are disheartening. Stereotypes are difficult to break when they are part of the dominant culture. Nevertheless, the amount of social change that has occurred in 30 years has been astounding. Looking at cultural changes in issues such as gay marriages, and stay-at-home dads, etc. show there have been modifications in gender roles that are now "acceptable." Not so for women participants in this study.

What is also discouraging is the critical implication of this investigation. It does not appear that this generation of college women will be championing a new, more "executive" profile for female managers. Perhaps, someone else will do a similar study to this one in another 30 years and find that women finally use the same words and traits they apply to men – effective, leader, and business-oriented – as they apply to themselves.

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