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Stories of Generational Leadership: Women Higher Education Administrators Voices

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Research focused on women in higher education is often conducted from a monolithic perspective of women. Few studies have investigated differences among and between women and the influences impacting such differences. Generational differences of individuals can influence values and preferences (Arsenault, 2004) as well as impact the organizational functioning of colleges and universities in the United States. Therefore, this mixed-method study explored these differences among female administrators in higher education. Quantitative analysis indicated generational differences in managerial practices among female leaders. However, more similarities than differences among the generational cohorts were discovered in the qualitative analysis. Implications for practice midlevel women administrators in student affairs are discussed.

Keywords: Management, Leadership, Generation, Women, Higher Education

Introduction

The American workforce is highly diverse with several generations represented. For the first time, four generations are working together in organizations – the Traditionals, Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Millennials (Coomes and DeBard, 2004). Employees within each generational cohort are collaborating with one another in numerous types of organizations, including higher education institutions. Data demonstrates a generational change; baby boomers are retiring at a rapid rate, which may cause a leadership talent shortage in the coming decades (Harris, Moran and Moran, 2004). This change impacts higher education in several ways. As Baby Boomers retire, more leadership opportunities will need to be filled.

Few researchers have explored the ways that generational differences shape female perspectives about leadership, and how the lack of awareness about these differences can impact the workplace (Arsenault, 2004; Lancaster & Stillman, 2002; Society for Human Resource Management, 2004).

Literature Review

The American workplace has four distinctly different generational cohorts – the traditionalists, the baby boomers, Generation X, and Millennials (Generational Differences among Working Women, 2006). Society assigns personality stereotypes to individuals according to generation. Differences between generations have been linked to major environmental influences that impact the socialization specific to cohorts of individuals; influences which impact the development of personality, values, beliefs and expectations of individuals. Traditionals, sometimes referred to as the Silent Generation and born between the years 1925 and 1942, represent the oldest generational cohort in the work environment in the United States (Coomes and DeBard, 2004). Mills (2009) states that Traditionalists value hierarchical leadership styles, are loyal to the organization, and embody the "work hard, save money" mentality (p. 363). Inter Change Group (2006) also supports Mills' assertions, listing these same traits, as well as "loyal, patriotic, and [showing] respect for authority and hierarchy" to further define this generation.

Baby Boomers, born between 1943 and 1960 (Coomes & DeBard, 2004), represent the largest percentage of individuals in the workforce; "comprising 40% of the workforce" (McDonald, 2008, p. 63). Cohort traits include "ambitious, career-oriented, and accustomed to intense competition for jobs"

(McDonald, 2008, p. 63). Mills (2009) explained that Boomers embrace a consensus-style leadership; they have adapted a "work hard, play hard" mentality and are loyal to their work (p. 363).

Generation X cohort members, born between 1961 and 1981 (Coomes & DeBard, 2004), are products of the "MTV generation" and emerging technologies, such as the personal computer. The children of this generation witnessed both parents working to provide for their families. Research supports that traits associated with the Gen X-ers include being "self-reliant and independent" (Flannery, 2008, p. 41) and "resourceful, skeptical, and [valuing] autonomy in their work" (Generational Differences, 2006). Mills (2009) explained that Gen X-ers desire feedback, clarity, and autonomy (Mills, 2009, p. 363).

The Millennials (also called Generation Y), born between 1981 and 2002 (Coomes & DeBard, 2004), could be considered the most technologically savvy cohort in the workplace. Cell phones and text messaging often replace personal communication. Of all the cohorts, the Millennials value a team-based leadership style, "where work should be fun" (Mills, 2009, p. 363). McDonald (2008) supports this further, stating that "Millennials typically value autonomy and reinforcement in their jobs, as well as workplaces that are fun, informal, and promote collegial relationships" (McDonald, 2008, p. 63). This group in particular is often categorized as "having a sense of entitlement and unreasonable expectations about work" (McDonald, 2008, p. 64).

Zemke et al. (2000) explained that one's generational affiliation impacts the views and attitudes related to management and leadership. Due in part, to the beliefs that generations differ in values, cognitions, and behavior; there is a lack of understanding among the generations (Dittmann, 2005). Kezar and Lester (2009) explained that differences among generations "if not managed properly….can result in conflict, misunderstanding, low morale, and organizational inefficiency and ineffectiveness" (p. 51).

Kezar and Lester (2009), in their comprehensive article on generational differences among females in higher education, explored aspects of feminism within the context of generational differences in the higher education setting; "intense generational differences" were found among women (p. 51). Kezar and Lester (2009) deftly identified numerous challenges to females in higher education that could arise from generational differences if such differences are not properly understood. Challenges include differing views on leadership and commitments to work and family. These views, which are shaped by the generation in which individuals were born and raised, impact the manner in which individuals act, treat one another, and view others in the workplace (Kezar & Lester, 2009).

Differing attitudes about work-life balance among the different generational cohorts, especially among women who are balancing work and family issues, could create barriers for women in the workplace (Jones and Taylor, in press; Mayor and Tikka, 2008). While not an empirical study, Kezar and Lester's (2009) work is an important step forward in understanding how generational differences impact women in higher education. However, a gap exists in understanding female staff members' views on management in higher education. Airini, Collings, Conner, McPherson, Midson, & Wilson (2011) point out that "it is not known how the new university environment and culture will enable or constrain women's individual capacities to develop, synthesize, communicate, and enact their ideas as leaders; how they will consider professional planning (if at all) and how they will make use of systems, networks and authorities" (p.46).

While research has been gathered on women in higher education, far fewer studies have investigated differences among and between women, and the influences to both other women and the environment based on such differences. Contextually, as leaders in higher education work to meet the challenges of changing demographics in the United States, there is a unique phenomenon that has yet to be explored in great detail: the impact of generational influences on the organizational functioning of colleges and universities in the United States and its specific impact on female staff in higher education.

Purpose of the Study
Despite Kezar and Lester's (2009) generational work, there is an existing gap in the generational understanding of female staff members' views on leadership in higher education. The growing diversification of higher education has led to more women being in leadership roles. Because of this growth, the researchers sought to explore female perceptions of management and leadership from the generational perspective among mid-level female administrators in higher education.

Research Questions
The research questions which guided this study were as follows:
1. What are the preferred leadership styles of females within the four different generations?
2. Are there differences and/or similarities that exist among leadership styles and behaviors of female administrators in different generational cohorts?

Research Design and Method
To gain wide understanding of the participants' perspectives, the researchers utilized an embedded data collection where both quantitative and qualitative data were collected simultaneously. A sequential explanatory design in which the qualitative data serve to inform the results collected during the quantitative data collection (Creswell, 2009) was utilized.

Survey Instrument
Quantitative data was collected via an online survey consisting of three sections: (a) Demographic Survey, (b) Managerial Practices Survey (MPS) (1994) which consisted of 38 questions

on various aspects of work values, work attitudes and work expectations drawn from previous studies in the literature, and (c) Leadership Behavior Description Questionnaire (LBDQ) by Halpin (1957) intended to collect information regarding preferred leadership styles from each generation. Qualitative data was collected via one-on-one online, semi-structured interviews.

Participants
Using random selection, 800 self-identified female midlevel student affairs administrators, who were members the American College Personnel Association, were invited to participate in this study. Of the email invitations (n = 697), 282 respondents returned the completed quantitative survey, for a response rate of 40.4%.

For the qualitative portion of the study, the researchers used purposeful sampling to identify participants from those participants who completed the previous quantitative survey (Patton, 2002). Thirty-seven participants initially began the interview process, and 34 completed the interview, for a completion rate of 91.9%.

Quantitative Participants
The participants for this study included 282 female student affairs administrators who identified themselves as midlevel professionals currently working in institutions of higher education across the United States. Respondents were placed in their appropriate generational categories: Traditionalist, Baby Boomer, Generation X, and Millennial. The majority of the respondents were Generation X (n=193, 68.4%), followed by Millennials (n=46, 16.3%), and Baby Boomers (n=43, 15.2%). No respondents were members of the Traditionalist category.

Qualitative Participants
In the qualitative portion of this study, thirty-two of the participants identified themselves as White, three as Asian/Pacific Islander, one as African American, and one as Latina/Hispanic. Six of the participants were members of the Baby Boomer generation; twenty-five were members of the Generation-X cohort, while the final six participants were members of the Millennial generation. No participants were identified as belonging to the Traditionalist cohort.

Data Analysis
Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the quantitative data, specifically the effects between the independent variables: generational status (Traditionalists, Baby Boomer, Generation X and Millennial), ethnicity years of experience in higher education and the dependent variables as outlined by the Managerial Practices Survey (MPS) and the Leadership Behavior Description Questionnaire (LBDQ).
In the qualitative portion of this study, written responses from the interviewees were analyzed to search for patterns and themes to formulate interpretations. Interview answers analyzed using an open coding method and concept mapping "to brainstorm the important ideas that recur" (Rossman and Rallis,

2003, p.284). Researchers also looked for counter-examples to be able to describe the range of opinions on each issue.

Results
Quantitative Results
Managerial Behaviors of Women Administrators
Table 1 outlines the overall means for subjects on each managerial behavior, while Table 2 outlines the overall means for each generational cohort. Overall, subjects reported problem solving (*M* = 4.1), clarifying (*M* =4.1), and informing (*M* =4.04) as important behaviors.   The least important behaviors to the entire group were monitoring (*M* =3.49), networking (*M* =3.50), and recognizing (*M* = 3.6).

Table 1. *Self-Reported Importance of Specific Managerial Behaviors Entire Sample*

Behavior	Behavior Mean	Standard Deviation
Effective Communication	4.0461	1.50728
Creative Problem Solving	4.1099	1.51574
Long Term Planning	4.0035	1.51974
Team Collaboration	3.9574	1.46549
Clarifying Expectations	4.1099	1.51574
Motivating	3.8972	1.52793
Rewarding	3.6277	1.53013
Effective Administration	3.4858	1.46907
Conflict Management	3.7518	1.52864
Mentoring	3.8652	1.54514
Building Relationships	3.5000	1.45208

(N=282)

Table 2*: Self-Reported Importance of Managerial Behaviors by Generational Cohort*

	Behavior	Behavior Mean	Standard Deviation
Baby Boomers			
	Effective Communication	4.10	1.53
	Creative Problem solving	4.23	1.50
	Long Term Planning	4.16	1.54
	Team Collaboration	4.11	1,51
	Clarifying Expectations	4.23	1.50
	Motivating	4.00	1.63
	Rewarding	3.77	1.58
	Effective Administration	3.62	1.48
	Conflict	3.86	1.65

	Management	
	Mentoring	3.74	1.71
	Team Building	3.72	1.47

Generation X		Mean	SD
	Effective Communication	4.03	1.49
	Creative Problem solving	4.11	1.52
	Long Term Planning	3.95	1.51
	Team Collaboration	3.97	1.45
	Clarifying Expectations	4.11	1.52
	Motivating	3.91	1.51
	Rewarding	3.62	1.51
	Effective Administration	3.49	1.44
	Conflict Management	3.73	1.51
	Mentoring	3.91	1.52
	Team Building	3.50	1.45
Millennials			
	Effective Communication	4.02	1.57
	Creative Problem solving	3.95	1.51
	Long Term Planning	4.06	1.55
	Team Collaboration	3.73	1.48
	Clarifying Expectations	3.95	1.51
	Motivating	3.73	1.51
	Rewarding	3.45	1.57
	Effective Administration	3.46	1.47
	Conflict Management	3.73	1.50
	Mentoring	3.76	1.49
	Team Building	3.26	1.45

Leadership Behaviors of Women Administrators

Based on the data collected, midlevel women administrators in this sample preferred leadership styles, as described by Haplin's (1957) Leadership Behavior Description Questionnaire, on behaviors such as friendship, mutual trust, respect, and warmth in relationship between the leader and members of the group; this was indicated by the substantially higher consideration mean scores than initiating structure mean scores. The sample's consideration mean score was 34.4, while the initiating structure mean score was 28.9. The mean scores for this sample are considered low for educational administrators on each dimension of leader behavior when compared to the norm mean score for consideration which was 44.70, and the norm mean for initiating structure was 37.90 (Halpin, 1957).

Table 3 provides the summary information on the LBDQ according to generational cohort for the research sample. All three cohorts, Baby Boomer, Generation X, and Millennial, rated themselves below the initiating structure dimension of the LBDQ and below the mean on the consideration dimension of the LBDQ.

Table 3 *LBDQ Mean Scores by Generational Cohort*

	Consideration		Initiating Structure	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Baby Boomers	37.3	15.80	32.2	14.1
Generation X	33.7	18.1	28.1	15.5
Millennials	35.7	16.9	29.7	14.8
Sample Mean Score	34.6	17.6	28.9	15.2
Norm Mean Score	44.7		37.9	

* generational cohorts not considered in sampling of norm mean scores.

Leadership Behavior and Managerial Practices Comparisons within Generational Cohort

A MANOVA test, with generation as the independent variable and values as the dependent variables, was administered to determine the mean differences, if any, between the independent variables, generational cohort and ethnicity, and the dependent variables outlined by the Managerial Practices Survey and the Leadership Behavior Description Questionnaire. Three generational cohorts, consisted of individuals born in the Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Millennial eras, were utilized because no participants self-identified as belonging to the Traditionalists cohort. An alpha level of 0.05 was used as the level of significance for this study.

The overall results of the analysis on main effect are illustrated in Table 4. Overall results suggested there was significant difference between generational groups (Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Millennial) on the combined dependent variables: $F=1.732$, $P=.015$, and Wilks' Lambda = .843 and ethnicities combined dependent variables: $F=1.826$, $P=.000$, and Wilks' Lambda = .586 where P value less than significant level 0.05.

Table 4 *Overall MANOVA tests using Wilks' Lambda*

Effect	Value	F=	P<
Intercept	.357	35.061	.000
Generational Cohort	.843	1.732	.015*
Ethnicity	.586	1.826	.000*
Ethnicity * Generational Cohort	.569	1.441	.003*

Significant when P < .05

To further explore the differences in mean group scores, a second level of analysis was conducted using two one-way MANOVAs between the generations and ethnic identity categories. Table 5 and Table 6 show the results. Statistically significant differences for 8 of the 11 managerial practices were found between generational groups and 10 of 11 managerial practices between ethnic identity categories. No other significant differences were found between the independent variables, generational cohort and ethnicity, and the dependent variables outlined by the Leadership Behavior Description Questionnaire.

Table 5 *One-Way MANOVA tests using Wilks' Lambda – Generational Cohorts*

Dependent Variable	Baby Boomers N=43 Mean	STD	Generation X N=193 Mean	STD	Millennials N=46 Mean	STD	F=	P< .05
Managerial Practices								
Effective Communication	4.14	1.54	4.03	1.49	4.02	1.57	1.88	.02*
Team Collaboration	4.12	1.52	3.97	1.45	3.74	1.48	1.78	.03*
Long Term Planning	4.16	1.54	3.95	1.51	4.07	1.55	1.50	.100
Creative Problem Solving	4.23	1.51	4.12	1.52	3.96	1.52	1.74	.04*
Clarifying Expectations	4.23	1.51	4.12	1.52	3.96	1.52	1.74	.04*
Effective Administration	3.63	1.48	3.29	1.45	3.33	1.56	1.42	.133
Motivating	4.00	1.63	3.91	1.51	3.74	1.51	2.01	.01*
Rewarding	3.76	1.57	3.64	1.51	3.46	1.57	1.57	.08
Mentoring	3.74	1.72	3.92	1.52	3.76	1.49	1.71	.04*
Conflict Management	3.86	1.66	3.73	1.51	3.74	1.50	1.89	.02*
Team Building	3.72	1.47	3.51	1.45	3.26	1.45	1,90	.02*
Leadership Behaviors								
Consideration	37.4	15.80	33,7	18.08	35.7	16.92	1.15	.310
Initiating Structure	32.2	14.10	28.1	15.45	29.7	14.84	.786	.701

*Significant at p<.05

Table (6) in Appendix (1)

Qualitative Results
With the research questions of the study acting as the guide for discovery, major categories were identified by use of selective coding for the qualitative section of this study. The following section discusses each category and the various themes that were found to support the categories. Emergent themes and how they answer each research question are also identified.

Four significant themes were identified from the qualitative data, which serves to support the quantitative findings.

Theme 1 - Personal Leadership: How Women View Themselves as Leaders
Regardless of generational cohort, participants viewed themselves as "team players", "collaborative", and "inclusive" in their interactions with subordinates. This is consistent with previous research that identified female leaders as less hierarchical and more collaborative than their male counterparts (e.g., Eagly, Johanneson-Schmidt, & van Engen, 2003). The researchers compared responses to current research on the various generations. Hammill (2005) described Baby Boomers as "consensual and collegial" as well as team players. However, the researchers noticed that it was those from the Generation X cohort that identified with the themes of big-picture thinker and collaborative leader, the very same traits used to describe the Baby Boomers.

Hammill (2005) explained that the Baby Boomers were big-picture thinkers, yet some participants in this study from the younger generational cohorts, including Generation X and Millennial, noted the importance of big-picture thinking in bringing about leadership. One Millennial participant stated:

As a leader, I would define myself as a macro-manager who likes to know the details. I find it important to consider the bigger picture when developing programs and guiding the activities of my staff…

Change Management
The participants were asked what leadership strategies they rely on when bringing about change in the organization; a highly important leadership behavior. Among the 34 participants, a frequency count of answers was conducted to further illuminate the responses and then compare the responses to quantitative findings. Of the 34 participants, 19 mentioned transparency, inclusion, and keeping people involved as crucial to change management. Fourteen participants mentioned the reliance of communication; six discussed strategy, planning, and research; and three discussed previous experiences and intuition in helping them lead through change. The themes that emerged most often were the reliance on communication and keeping people involved, and these were consistent among the generations. For example, some Generation Xers emphasized listening as a crucial element to executing change.

It should be noted that while many Generation X participants mentioned relying upon modes of communication in their leadership behavior, it was the Baby Boomers who had the highest mean score for communication in the Leadership Questionnaire. Yet when strategies were discussed in the qualitative portion of the study, all the Baby Boomers discussed themes consistent with consensus building. Interestingly, more Generation X participants who had lower mean scores for communication than Baby Boomers, appeared to rely more heavily on communication when bringing about change.

While some Millennials indicated relying on communication, the more common leadership trait relied upon by this cohort fell within the themes of experience (such as what has worked in the past), transparency, and intuition. One participant explained that she utilizes "inclusion, transparency, intuition, and firmness", while another member of the Millennial generation explained that it is important to admit "when a change was not well executed or didn't have the intended effect."

Comparing qualitative findings to the quantitative data, Baby Boomers had higher mean scores for clarifying expectations, motivating, creative problem solving, conflict management, and team building. Within these managerial behaviors, statistical significance was found among the generations, indicating generational differences in relation to the managerial behavior. The qualitative findings support these quantitative findings in numerous areas. First, all but one of the Baby Boomer participants in the qualitative portion of the study mentioned relying on creativity when leading teams, which is in direct support of the creative problem solving mean score for which Boomer's held the highest mean score.

Baby Boomers had the highest mean score for team collaboration, higher than both the Generation X and Millennial participants, in the quantitative data. However, when asking how the participants would describe themselves as leaders, more Generation X participants commented on collaborative and participative leadership than did Boomers or Millennials. It should be noted that Generation X participants had higher mean scores for mentoring than either Baby Boomers or Millennials in the quantitative portion of the data. While mentoring questions were not asked within the qualitative portion, several Generation X participants discussed this idea of leading to help staff members, which could be indicative of the Generation X participants' inclination towards mentoring behavior as a leader.

Overall, the qualitative findings directly support of the researchers' quantitative findings that female mid-level managers in higher education are inclined toward using more participative means of leading and see informing as an important leadership behavior. In addition, the participants noted both planning and informing as important behaviors for effective leadership.

Theme 2 - Perceptions of Differences in Leadership Styles Among Various Generations
Participants were asked to consider the differences among leadership traits of those older and younger than themselves. Some Generation X members had negative views of those older than themselves, explaining that those older appeared to be "beaten down" as well as "burnt out, pessimistic, and often frozen in old ways of doing things." Conversely, some Generation X members saw numerous positive elements of leaders who fell within older generational cohorts, evidenced by such statements as, "those older than me seem to project more confidence and less interest in consensus", and "with time

comes experience, and I think some of the experiences I've had help in my decision-making".

Participants were also divided among perceptions of those younger than themselves. Interestingly, it was the Baby Boomers who had more positive things to say about those younger than themselves than did the Generation X cohort of participants, as evidenced by these comments:

> Those younger than me have a refreshing outlook…they tend to be very creative. I love working with those younger than me! Women and men my age and younger have a much more relaxed, participative style than men or women who are older than I am.

Many Generation X participants noted no differences in leadership styles among the various generations. However, one participant mentioned, "[I] certainly [see] differences in leadership styles based on personality styles, but I find other leaders on campus from all generations with similar styles as my own." These comments support the findings illustrated in the quantitative results, which revealed generational differences in managerial behaviors, but not leadership behavior.

Theme 3 – Issues of Work/Life Balance
A pervasive theme among different generational cohorts is that of work/life balance. As noted earlier, research shows that different generations hold very different views of the importance of work versus life, with the Baby Boomers witnessing work as essential to a greater life, the Generation X cohort witnessing work as impacting life, and both Generation X and Millennials viewing work as a part of life. Certainly, having a leader from one generational cohort and subordinates from other cohorts could pose an issue in the workplace. The results from the Society for Human Resource Management Generational Differences survey (2004) indicated that one in every five individuals felt as though he or she was treated with disrespect from a coworker from a different generation.

The researchers set out to investigate this further by asking questions related to work/life balance. The participants were asked, "At this point in your life, what is your highest priority, or your primary concern?" A second question was, "Where are you putting your most effort or energy?"

Baby Boomers did indicate that at this stage of their lives, work is the main focus. This is not a surprise, as the research has suggested that Baby Boomers are "ambitious" (McDonald, 2008, p. 63) and tend to embrace a "work hard, play hard" mentality (Mills, 2009, p. 363). One Baby Boomer participant stated that her priority at this stage includes:

Finishing up my 30 years in this career and stay [sic] healthy, have energy, and still be seen/appreciated as a valuable staff member. Most energy is mentoring other staff and covering my areas and taking care of staff.

Several Generation X participants supported previous findings that work/life balance is truly important to them at this stage of their lives. One participant said that in her career, helping her

department was important, but in life, starting a family was her priority. Another participant said that "My energy is quite equally split between being a mother and successful in my career". Many participants noted that balance is critical, because they are now mothers, employees, and students, working on advanced degrees. One Generation X participant noted, "In life, balancing my career, school (working on my PhD), and raising my family. I think this is really a test of everything that I'm made of."

However, there were some comments that indicated conflict between previous research and where some Generation X participants were in their lives. Some Generation X participants clearly made specific choices for one aspect or the other in the work/life balance situation. One Generation X participant stated that "Personally? I'm trying to complete a PhD". Another participant said that "My career is my highest priority right now."

One Millennial explained that life is most important to her; stating that "God and my family are always my highest priority. After that is education, then work". Another Millennial participant echoed a very different priority, as evidenced by her statement, "To be honest, I am still trying to prove myself to my colleagues on campus. Since I have held so many titles within my office, I think some of the older staff are still trying to understand my place in the office."

Theme 4 –– Generational Perspectives on Work Differences Among Men and Women
Participants were asked their perspectives regarding any potential differences between themselves as female leaders and their male counterparts. While this study is grounded in generational perspectives, the researchers felt it was important to compare both individual and generational patterns of differences and similarities regarding the ways in which women and men lead and manage.

A frequency count indicated that over half of the participants (20) were evenly split on their perspectives of either men being perceived as direct and bottom-line in their approaches, or women possessing the opposite style – very inclusive and supportive. While the quantitative portion of the study suggested that female participants did not view supportive behaviors as necessary for successful management, it was deemed to be an important element across the qualitative findings. For example, one participant explained:

I am more inclusive in my decision making process than my male peers. I seek input from others before making a decision even if I already know what action I will take. This is often seen as a weakness, but I do it intentionally to create more buy-in. I also see a difference in communication style. I give my staff a lot of information while many of my male peers do not, as readily, share.

Three of the four Baby Boomers felt that men were "showy", and "in front of the scenes." One Baby Boomer explained that men are "more aggressive. Very showy in their

accomplishments. Very fake friendly towards their supervisors; some insincerity." Younger Generation X participants and older Millennials (those with birthdates in the late seventies and early eighties), overwhelmingly felt that there really was no difference among themselves and their male counterparts. Additionally, it was mentioned by these cohorts that any differences tend to be related more to personality than gender. Another subtheme that appeared when coding the comments was that it was perceived that men can make tough decisions, but when women do so, the women may appear "bitchy" to others. Perception can be difficult to quantify, as it is as much a "feeling" as a reality. Note however that the participants who made these comments were from the Generation X cohort, more specifically from the 1970s generation.

Discussion and Conclusion
Recent studies on generational differences in the workplace indicate marked distinctions among Baby Boomers, Generation Xers, and Millennials working in contemporary organizations (e.g., Dries et al., 2008; Smola & Sutton, 2002; Zemke, 2001). Others studies contradict these findings by demonstrating that the three generations were more similar than different (Appelbaum, Serena, & Shapiro, 2004). Perception about different generational cohorts and gendered notions of leadership are reflected but also reproduced into reality in the workplace. Simply put, perception creates reality.

Based on an analysis of current literature regarding generational perspectives of the workplace, the researchers assumed generational gaps existed in women administrators in higher education for managerial behaviors. Significant generational differences amongst preferred managerial practices were found in the quantitative portion of this study; managerial characteristics such as informing, problem solving, motivation, and managing conflict were examined. These generational differences, although found between all three cohorts, were most profound between the Baby Boomer and Millennial cohorts.

Results indicated that there are some generational differences in management values among the three generations represented in this study, as well as differences between men and women, as perceived by the female participants. These findings are consistent with the beliefs of both theories. As more females from various generations work together, their views and their unique ways in which they manage and lead could have a tremendous impact on fellow employees. This is consistent with Strauss and Howe's (1991) theory, as cited by Coomes and DeBard (2004) which emphasizes the idea of biography impacting those within the generational cohort to which they were born, as well as impacting the personalities of those around them.

Baby Boomers and the Generation X cohort both indicated that creative problem solving and clarifying expectations are the most important managerial skills they used on the job. This is vastly different from the individuals in the Millennial cohort who indicated long term planning and effective planning skills

are more important. Moreover, respondents indicated that networking, motivating, and inspiring employees and recognizing their special contributions, while necessary, were not regarded as important elements of being successful. These findings are consistent with previous research, which has shown that female leaders tend to value cooperation and team-work and are less hierarchical in their thinking than men (Eagly, Johanneson-Schmidt, & van Engen, 2003).

One of the most surprising findings is related to the Millenial generation participants. Research has suggested (e.g., Howe & Strauss, 2007; Jonas-Dwyer & Pospisal, 2004) that the Millennials value teamwork and networking, among other things, in activities related to learning and working. The findings in this study do not support this. Millennials in this study, while reporting that networking was important, did not report networking as the most important skill. In addition, the Millennial participants in this study found team-building was the least important management behavior they practice, despite the stereotype that those within the Millennial cohort value teamwork. It is important to point out however, that the networking, which Millennials might find important today, includes social networking, and communicating via Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn, and this could help to explain part of this discrepancy.

Qualitative comments highlighted more consistency in chosen management behaviors among the different generations than did the quantitative findings. For example, Generation X participants held lower mean scores in communication than the Baby Boomers, but Generation X cohort members consistently mentioned the importance of communication as central to their leadership practices and behaviors in the qualitative comments. The generations appeared to have varying viewpoints between themselves as leaders and their male counterparts.

Differences among generations are important findings, as previous literature has suggested that research on differences among generations may be anecdotal at best. The differences in management practices across the three generations emphasize the challenges faced by upper-level administrators as they try to supervise and develop staff who identify with various generations. To foster inclusion, upper-level managers need to educate themselves on the basic values of each generation, while understanding that their own beliefs related to management practices may not be relevant for all cohorts of employees. Fox (2011) warned that it is important not to stereotype based on assumptions regarding generations and suggests managers strive to see the similarities—creating greater inclusion among employees, and lessening the chances for stereotyping. This is also consistent with Coomes and DeBard's (2004) reminder that Strauss and Howe's (1997) generational theory is similar to measures of central tendency; generational theory can help to explain and illuminate unique traits among individuals, however, it should not be used to generalize individuals. Wong et al's (2008) research found that despite small important generational differences, any

differences might have been more attributable to experiences derived by age rather than generational cohort. Therefore, managers need to be reminded that assumptions about a particular generation may not be true for each individual.

While generational differences may exist as related to management practices and behaviors, the researchers conclude that the chosen styles may be similar regardless of generational cohort. In addition, generational differences that do exist may not emerge within the student affairs environment, or, if these differences do emerge, it is plausible that the differences are negligible and do not matter when working within higher education. It is also a possibility that the environment brings out certain leadership traits, and most of the participants moved towards certain shared traits within this environment.

Limitations of the Study

Limitations of this study include the fact that gender was a constant, rather than a variable. Therefore, the results of this study may not be generalizable to both genders. The sample population of this study did not include members of the Traditionalists cohort. Additionally, the extent to which the female administrators who participated in this study were successful in the use of their preferred managerial practices, within the context of generation, at their institutions is unknown. Thus, the management profile depicted in this study may not be limited to only those female participants who are successful in leading their respective campuses.

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Appendix (1)

Table 6 *One-Way MANOVA tests using Wilks' Lambda –Ethnicity*

Dependent Variable	African American N=21 Mean	STD	Native American N=1 Mean	STD	Asian N=11 Mean	STD	Hispanic N=15 Mean	STD	White N=225 Mean	STD	Other N=5 Mean	STD	F	P< .05
Managerial Practices														
Effective Communication	4.10	1.26	5.00	0.00	4.55	.69	4.47	.83	4.06	1.52	3.2	1.92	3.05	.007*
Team Collaboration	4.05	1.20	4.00	0.00	4.45	.52	4.40	.63	3.96	1.49	3.4	1.95	3.03	.007*
Long Term Planning	4.14	1.28	5.00	0.00	4.64	.50	4.97	1.10	4.01	1.53	3.80	2.17	2,89	.01*
Creative Problem Solving	4.29	1.15	5.00	0.00	4.55	.52	4.60	.51	4.10	1.54	3.6	2.19	3.35	.003*
Clarifying Expectations	4.29	1.15	5.00	0.00	4.55	.52	4.60	.51	4.10	1.55	3.60	2.19	3.35	.003*
Effective Administration	3.38	1.36	4.00	0.00	4.18	.75	3.87	.83	3.48	1.48	3.00	1.87	2.01	.063
Motivating	4.00	1.30	5.00	0.00	4.09	1.45	4.40	.74	3.89	1.53	3.60	2.07	2.84	.011*
Rewarding	3.67	1.32	5.00	0.00	3.64	1.50	3.93	.80	3.64	1.54	3.40	1.95	2,50	.02*
Mentoring	3.95	1.52	5.00	0.00	4.18	1.47	4.27	.59	3.87	1.54	3.40	1.95	2.50	.03*
Conflict Management	3.95	1.24	5.00	0.00	4.09	1.45	4.07	.703	3.74	1.54	3.60	2.07	2.97	.008*
Team Building	3.50	1.45	4.00	0.00	3.91	1.04	3.93	.88	3.50	1.44	1.80	1.10	3.33	.004*
Leadership Behaviors														
Consideration	39.3	10.09	50.00	0.00	39.0	13.38	28.6	21.22	34.2	19.90	28.6	21.15	.954	.457
Initiating Structure	38.3	9.57	40.0	0.00	31.3	11.54	24.5	18.68	28.2	15.20	23.6	21.59	.383	.890

*Significant at p<.05