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Gender And Leadership In Business:
A Comparative Analysis In Germany And The United States

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Abstract

Purpose – The research aims to analyze how gender impacts the leadership style of top-level business leaders. The study explores how culture affects the relationship between gender and leadership style.

Design/methodology/approach – This investigation proposes a quantitative method to collect data through a survey distributed by email to top-level managers of the 500 largest organizations, measured by total revenue, in the United States and Germany.

Findings – Expected findings demonstrate that gender does condition leadership style however, culture impacts this relationship as a moderator.

Research limitations/implications – A lower than expected total response rate of the survey may project limitations as well as the effect of globalization, and macroeconomic and socioeconomic characteristics not considered in this research.

Originality/value – This paper is expected to provide theoretical and managerial implications by acquiring greater awareness of the relationship between gender and leadership with culture as a moderator. This study provides information for managerial training programs focusing on international management and leadership, specifically for organizations operating between the two cultural settings of Germany and the United States.

Keywords – Leadership Style, Gender, Culture

Paper type – Proposed quantitative research

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Table of Contents

1. Introduction.....	1
2. Literature Review.....	2
2.1 Leadership.....	2
2.1.1 Leadership Styles.....	3
2.2 Gender In Leadership And The Glass Ceiling And Glass Cliff Phenomena.....	6
2.3 Culture As A Moderator In Leadership.....	11
2.3.1 Humane Orientation.....	13
2.3.2 Assertiveness And Gender Egalitarianism.....	15
2.3.3 Gender, Culture, Leadership Style.....	17
3. Methodology.....	20
4. Conclusion and Future Research.....	22
5. References.....	24

1. Introduction

Until today, women are underrepresented in top leadership positions due to a number of barriers females encounter in the pursuit of climbing the corporate ladder (Hurley and Choudhary, 2016). Not only do women face gender discrimination and stereotyping in the world of business internationally, but also are confronted with impeding factors such as career interruption due to motherhood, the lack of a same-sex mentor and the continuous stress of work-life imbalance (Hurley and Choudhary, 2016). Furthermore, females are repeatedly challenged with the glass ceiling and glass cliff phenomenon.

Stereotypically women are associated with characteristics such as being more interpersonally sensitive, gentle, nurturing, and sympathetic, while men are considered to be more assertive, controlling and dominant (Eagly and Karau, 2002). However, do these traditional beliefs translate into the behavior of a leader influencing a manager's leadership style? What leadership style do females and males in top leading positions engage in? Is there a notable gender difference? When considering two highly competitive countries globally, being the United States and Germany, is culture a moderator of the relationship between gender and leadership style?

The objective of this study is to analyze how gender influences the leadership style of top-level business leaders. Moreover, the effect of culture on the relationship between gender and leadership style is explored.

2. Literature Review

In the first part of this review the concept of leadership is introduced, followed by a sub-section that explains leadership styles. The next section will turn its focus to discussing gender in leadership and the glass ceiling and glass cliff phenomena. Then the rationale of the selected sample countries will be defended shortly. Finally, the last section emphasizes on culture as a moderator.

2.1 Leadership

Leadership is defined as “the ability of an individual to influence, motivate, and enable others to contribute toward the effectiveness and success of the organizations of which they are members” (House et al., 2004, p. 13). Another definition of leadership by Burns conveys that, “leadership is a relationship between leaders and followers – a mutual interaction that ultimately changes both” (1978, p. 19). Foremost, it is important to understand that leadership is not necessarily management. The difference between a manager and a leader is that managers create stability, while leaders make a change.

Zaleznik (2004) explains in a Harvard Business Review article that managers need to build competence, while a manager must be rational and effective as problem solving is a main responsibility. A manager needs to have control and needs to get people to operate efficiently in order to comply with company objectives and reach the organization’s goals in a timely manner. Essential elements for leadership are inspiration, vision, human passion, all aspects related to motivation and the driving corporate success (Yukl, 2010). Leaders are not bound to a structure, meaning that accepting chaos is often part of their daily schedule. Tension and risk are also aspects of leadership, as a leader is shaping a future even if it means trying unexpected directions.

Gosling and Mintzberg make a strong statement: “action without reflection is thoughtless; reflection without action is passive” (2003, p. 2). A manager needs to possess a reflective mindset and truly manage himself/herself. A manager’s responsibilities are to manage change, relationships, contexts and organizations. In this sense, it is essential that a manager takes action to make a change, is collaborative in order to manage and nourish relationships with other companies or clients, has a worldly mindset in order to manage the context and an analytical mindset to manage the organization. Especially the worldly mindset is what this paper will elaborate on, as in today’s world especially through globalization, managers need to be culturally aware and sensitive, they need to have an understanding of other country’s social, environmental, cultural and economical environments, beyond their own in order to manage and lead successfully. Managers have to get to know other people’s circumstances in world’s beyond their own, then return to their origin and understand their own culture deeper, from a different perspective. That is a worldly mindset.

Usually a leader does require management skills in order to be a successful leader, keeping in mind, that in a way leadership and management are complementary. Literature defines various leadership styles. This study focuses on managers in the business environment with leadership skills.

2.1.1 Leadership Styles

This study concentrates on three types of leadership styles, namely transactional, transformational and ethical. However, other classifications such as the consideration and initiating structure for example can be found in literature by Gartzia and Baniandrés (2016) and by van Emmerik et al. (2008). Whereas, for instance, a research by Yuan and Lee (2011) discusses transformational, transactional and charismatic leadership.

Transactional Leadership Style:

Managers following the transactional leadership style “identify and clarify subordinates’ job tasks and communicate to them how successful execution of task will lead to the receipt of desirable rewards” (Saeed et al., 2014, p. 218). In other words, these types of managers “determine and define goals for their subordinates, suggesting how to execute tasks and provide feedback” (Saeed et al., 2014, p. 218). Stashevsky and Koslowsky (2006) reason that, “transactional leadership is associated with contingent reinforcement” (p. 64) allowing the worker freedom in his/her performance, while providing him/her with the reassurance that the leader will be able to intervene in the event that a problem occurs, where support is imperative. By executing this leadership style, the leader and the subordinate are “involved in a series of exchanges or bargains so as to assure goal attainment” (Stashevsky and Koslowsky, 2006, p. 64). Yuan and Lee state that transactional leadership is a more “conventional style in which work is exchanged for resources” (2011, p. 124). In summary, “transactional leaders influence subordinates by rewards in exchange for their efforts, also called contingent rewards, supervises workers closely and take corrective actions when required, known as active management by exception, or passively manages employees and take measures when necessary, which is passive management by exception” (Yuan and Lee, 2011, p. 124). Eagly et al. (2003) summarize that transactional leaders build exchange relationships with their subordinates by appealing to the workers self-interest, which in a way is managing in a more conventional sense like Yuan and Lee (2011) already clarified. Subordinates’ responsibilities are unambiguous, rewards are assigned when objectives are met and workers are corrected in the occasion of failing to meet objectives.

Transformational Leadership Style:

Transformational leaders focus on future needs and are more concerned with long-term issues (Saeed et al., 2014). Those leaders hold a holistic perspective. Generally, this type of leadership is linked to “high levels of effort, performance and satisfaction” as per Saeed et al. (2014, p. 218). Ergeneli et al. (2007) say that transformational leadership is a leadership style that is considered to be effective globally as it goes beyond cultural differences. Transformational leaders motivate their subordinates and are commonly not involved in bargaining in order to achieve unsurpassable, longer-lasting goals instead of short-term ones (Ergeneli et al., 2007). Therefore, transformational leaders are often viewed as “charismatic, a visionary who provides individual attention and intellectual stimulation” as Stashevsky and Koslowsky (2006, p. 64) explain. Yuan and Lee convey that transformational leaders are depicted as “able to elicit support from subordinates by their character, in this context especially charisma, communicate a vision that creates followers’ enthusiasm, meaning inspirational motivation, encourages divergent thinking and innovativeness within the organization, known as intellectual stimulation, and provides individual encouragement and support through mentoring or coaching, being individual consideration” (2011, p. 124). Eagly et al. (2003) reason that, “effective leaders inspire their followers and nurture their ability to contribute to the organization” (p. 570) which is known as the transformational leadership style. Eagly et al. explain that transformational leadership involves “establishing oneself as a role model by gaining the trust and confidence of followers” (2003, p. 570). Leaders engaging in this type of leadership style define future goals and develop plans in order to achieve these goals. Furthermore, Eagly et al. say “by mentoring and empowering their followers, transformational leaders encourage them to develop their full potential and thereby to contribute more capably to their organization” (2003, p. 570). Eagly et al. (2003), label this future-oriented, empowering style as charismatic leadership. Additionally, Yuan and Lee portray charismatic leaders as having “high self-confidence, visionary, excellent communication skills, strong conviction, extraordinary behavior, recognized change agent, and a strong need for power” (2011, p. 124). Effective leaders display both, the transformational and transactional leadership styles, as proclaimed by Eagly et al. (2003).

Ethical Leadership Style:

Martin et al. (2009) explain that ethical leadership concerns “how leaders use their social power in the decisions they make, the actions they engage in and the ways in which they influence others,” (p. 131) or expressed in other terms “ethical leadership is a manner that respects the rights and dignity of others” (p. 131). According to the research by Bedi et al. “ethical leadership is positively associated with transformational leadership and the contingent reward dimension of transactional leadership” (2016, p. 527). There are differences between ethical leaders, transactional and transformational leaders because “ethical leaders not only demonstrate ethical behavior to their

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followers but they also proactively influence their followers' ethical conduct" as Bedi et al. (2016, p. 530) convey. Clearly, the ethical leadership style does overlap with other leadership styles in some aspects, as ethical leaders for example may use "transactional leadership behaviors to promote follower ethical conduct" (Bedi et al., 2016, p. 530) but also may engage in behaviors associated with transformational leadership. An example herefore would be in the context of "ethical decision-making, role modeling and showing genuine concern for the well-being of their followers" (Bedi et al., 2016, p. 530). The research by Bedi et al. (2016) proves that there is a strong correlation between ethical and transformational leadership.

Other Leadership Styles:

Van Emmerik et al. (2008) differentiate between two additional leadership styles, namely the consideration and initiating structure. In this context, consideration behaviors are referred to as friendly and interpersonally supportive, wherein these type of leaders create a "supportive environment of warmth, friendliness, and helpfulness, for instance by being approachable, looking out for the welfare of the group, doing little things for subordinates and giving advance notice of change" as van Emmerik et al. (2008, p. 299) explain. The initiating structure indicates a more task-oriented and directive behavior, wherein leaders show a strong "emphasis on assigning tasks, specifying procedures to be followed, clarifying expectations of subordinates, and scheduling work to be done" as van Emmerik et al. (2008, p. 299) reason. Eagly et al. say that the "task-oriented leadership style is defined as a concern with accomplishing assigned tasks by organizing task-relevant activities, and the interpersonally oriented style is defined as a concern with maintaining interpersonal relationships and tending to others' morale and welfare" (2003, p. 570).

A further terminology of leadership is democratic versus autocratic or participative versus directive leadership. Eagly et al. (2003) say that leaders who behave democratically allow subordinates to participate in decision-making, while leaders who behave autocratically discourage subordinates from participating in decision-making. This being said, the initiating leadership style is connected with the task-oriented, autocratic and transactional leadership style, while the consideration style is linked to the interpersonally oriented, ethical, democratic style and transformational leadership.

Another common leadership style mentioned in literature is the laissez-faire leadership style. Laissez-faire leaders abdicate their responsibility and avoid making decisions, while "subordinates working under this kind of supervisor are left to their own devices to execute their job responsibilities" as Saeed et al. (2014, p. 218) indicate. Eagly et al. voice that, "the laissez-faire style is marked by a general failure to take responsibility for managing" (2003, p. 571). Therefore, in this research paper, the laissez-faire leadership style will not be taken into consideration for the analysis.

Rohmann and Rowold (2009) claim that, “leadership roles influence leadership behavior, where leaders evoke certain expectations in co-workers when they are categorized as male or female,” (p. 547) referred to as gender roles. The investigation mentions that leadership agentic versus communal attributes appear to be particularly pertinent in the context of leadership. Agentic attributes for instance being “dominant, independent and competitive are more strongly ascribed to men than to women,” while “communal attributes such as helpful, sympathetic, and interpersonally sensitive are ascribed more strongly to women than men” (Rohman and Rowold, 2009, p. 547).

2.2 Gender In Leadership And The Glass Ceiling And Glass Cliff Phenomena

When reviewing the share of women aged 16 and older in U.S. labor force, Hurley and Choudhary (2016) pointed out that the labor force participation rate was recorded at 33.9 percent in 1950, growing tremendously in the 1970s and 1980s and reaching 57.7 percent by 2012. According to the United States Department of Labor (2017), analyzing the U.S. labor force participation rates from 2015, being the most recent available statistics, the rate of total women in decreased to 56.7, with projections to drop to 55.8 percent in 2024. Men in comparison represented 69.1 percent in 2015, while the projection for 2024 will be at 66.2 percent. Besides these statistics, women have only made moderate advancement in acquiring top leadership positions in the world of business, which is being reflected in a study by Hurley and Choudhary stating that “women CEO’s of Fortune 500 companies make up only 5.2 percent of the total CEO’s in 2015” (2016, p. 251). One of the key phenomena explaining the low percentage of women in leadership position is the glass ceiling and glass cliff.

Oakley reasons that the glass ceiling, “a transparent barrier that prevents women from moving up the corporate ladder past a certain point” is evidenced “dramatically in the statistics on the percentage of women in senior management positions in large corporations” (2000, p. 321). Globally, female Chief Executive Officers (CEO’s) are extremely rare in large organizations. Although females make up 40 percent of managers in the United States, women hold only 0.5 percent of the highest paid management positions in the largest corporations, as Oakley (2000) points out. The Federal Glass Ceiling Commission (1995) revealed in their findings, that among the top 1000 industrial firms and the 500 largest U.S. corporations of all types as ranked by the Fortune magazine, 97 percent of senior managers are white and an estimated 95-97 percent of senior managers are male. In comparison, the percentage of female senior managers is ranking from a high of 8 percent in Belgium to 0.3 percent in Japan (The Federal Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995). Clearly, “female CEO’s are exceptions rather than the rule,” voiced Hurley and Choudhary (2016, p. 250) while in fact their research highlights that “only 24 of the CEO’s of Standard and Poor’s (S&P) 500 companies in 2015 were women.” When taking a look at the database from Fortune 500 (2017), out of the 500 companies, only 55 CEO’s are females in 2017.

This is clearly an underrepresentation of women at top-management level jobs. It is evident that females encounter a number of barriers, which either prevents them from “moving up the corporate hierarchy,” referred to as the glass ceiling phenomenon, or they are “persisting in the top leadership positions even after they have broken through the glass ceiling” which is known as the glass cliff phenomenon (Hurley and Choudhary, 2016, p. 250). In other words, while women are shattering the glass ceiling, they are often set up for failure, where they are “pushed over the edge, often being the reason why women leave the company before reaching the top” (Hurley and Choudhary, 2016, p. 253). This is called the glass cliff phenomenon. So, although there are women who climb the latter to senior management positions, they often face confrontation and problems in those positions. Factors such as “greater scrutiny and judgment over their management style and performance to receiving less support from their peers, being primarily males, over issues including work-life integration” display a number of reasons why women are faced with difficulties in top leading roles (Hurley and Choudhary, 2016, p. 253).

There is a gender role difference regarding preferences and productivity in business leadership. For example, women have to constantly fight for the avoidance of stress from work-life imbalance, which is linked with the executive office suit and the women’s desire for independence and entrepreneurship as Oakley (2000) conveys. A possible origin of discrimination and stereotyping of women in top management can be rooted back to the past, where females were not represented in such roles. This in turn can be related to the reason of unavailability of same-sex mentoring for females. In summary, impeding factors of women in management are motherhood, which results in “career interruption” along with a “lack of a role model or mentor and a conscious continuous decision to avoid the stress of balancing work and life,” (Hurley and Choudhary, 2016, p. 251).

There are two categories of causation explaining the lack of women in senior management positions. Oakley (2000) considers one as the “barriers created by corporate practices,” (p. 322) which are impediments that stem from objective. Such causes of gender imbalance are often related to the organization’s preference of the “recruitment, retention, and promotion of males over females, especially in jobs that comprise the typical career paths of a future senior manager” (Oakley, 2000, p. 322). The second category mentioned by Oakley are “behavioral and cultural causes, which are rooted in explanations that revolve around issues of stereotyping, tokenism, power, preferred leadership styles, and the psychodynamics of male/female relations” (2000, p. 322). Oakley’s research points out that the female underrepresentation is considered to be an ethical issue, whereby “in male-dominated and predominantly male-led large corporations, women’s inputs and voices are often stifled” (2000, p. 322).

The gradual advancement of women rising to top management is somewhat surprising as researchers have provided evidence that women possess a number of crucial skills required for managing a workforce and taking on a leadership position (Hurley and Choudhary, 2016). “Women have a unique combination of interpersonal and work ethic traits that seem tailor-made for the management ranks,” describes Wells (2001, p. 43).

As women do possess the soft skills and competences to lead a company, it is common, that women are designated to a leadership position when the organization finds itself in a crisis situation, where circumstances involving other people need to be managed (Hurley and Choudhary, 2016). These high stress level environments are frequently associated with a set up for failure in management, while some women in contrary, use such high-risk situations as an opportunity to prove their leadership skills.

The Federal Glass Ceiling Commission (1995) of the U.S. Department of Labor identified “societal, governmental, internal business, and business structural barriers as the four main reasons for the glass ceiling.” Since global competition challenges multinational firms to maximize effectiveness of their human resources, the organizations are in quest of promoting more women to senior management. Furthermore, stakeholders create pressures due to the clear underrepresentation of women in upper management (Oakley, 2000). Hurley and Choudhary highlight that the USA Congress Joint Economic Committee in 2010 found a “direct correlation between corporate performance and women’s representation in corporate leadership” (2016, p. 252). Additionally, Hurley and Choudhary’s study confirms, based on their research conducted, that women were evaluated higher than men on every level, and “the higher the management level, the greater the gap” (2016, p. 252). A stereotypical belief is that “women display a more transformational and contingent reward behavior, and fewer management-by-exceptions and laissez-faire behavior than men” (Vinkenbureg et al., 2011, p. 10). Muller-Kahle and Schiehl (2013) argue that, female CEO’s do not possess as much structural power as male CEO’s when filling a dual CEO/Chair role in the firm, providing a reason why generally, women are more likely to be given the less powerful role of CEO and President, instead of dual CEO and Chair roles. Nonetheless, it is important to note that “female CEO’s are more likely to gain structural power if they are entrepreneurs, work in large companies, or possess an elite education” (Muller-Kahle and Schiehl, 2013, p. 666). Stashevsky and Koslowsky (2006) point out that intelligence is always related to leadership effectiveness, while additionally, in groups, cohesion between group members creates motivation and improves performance due to stronger task commitment, which also leads to better coordination of activities and results. Stashevsky and Koslowsky (2006) share that “social and motivational component plays a critical role in the cohesiveness construct,” (p.66) as it creates the expectation that if a

group is led “by a transformational leader who stresses motivation and stimulation would evince greater group cohesion” (p.66).

Therefore, it can be said that knowledge and team cohesiveness anticipate team performance, particularly among men, while transformational leadership is associated with a higher level of team cohesiveness, as compared to transactional leadership (Stashevsky and Koslowsky, 2006). When taking a look at inspirational motivation Vinkenbunrg et al. (2011) remarks that this aspect was more essential for men than women, specifically for the promotion to CEO, while on the contrary, individualized consideration was perceived as vital for females when promoted to senior management. Consistent with these stereotypical beliefs about leadership, Vinkenbunrg et al. highlights that “women interested in promotion may be well advised to blend individualized consideration and inspirational motivation behaviors” (2011, p. 10). A disadvantage for women wanting to reach the CEO position in the United States is having children (Hurley and Choudhary, 2016). Also, an imperative point to note is that women have a greater chance to secure the CEO position in larger companies in terms of employees, while more education may not necessarily be a benefit to acquire a top management position (Hurley and Choudhary, 2016).

When relating back to the leadership styles introduced previously, Rohmann and Rowold argue that, “women are judged to be more transformational than men” (2009, p. 545). Eagly et al. (2003) confirm that female leaders were more transformational than male leaders but add evidence that women engaged in more of the contingent reward behaviors that are a component of transactional leadership as well. Male leaders mostly demonstrated more active and passive management by exception, being distinct aspects of transactional leadership and laissez-faire leadership (Eagly et al., 2003).

The distinction of males and females in leadership are fairly modest, though, women exceeded men in all aspects of the leadership style relating positively to leaders’ effectiveness (Eagly et al., 2003). Nonetheless, women are confronted with notably more impediments to becoming leaders than men (van Emmerik et al., 2008). Still, the argument mentioned could reflect a relationship between women’s interpersonal skills, which are pivotal for top leading positions, and effectiveness created through motivation of the subordinates. Moreover, this can conclude that women’s classical leadership styles are inclined to be more transformational than those of men and thus more focused on aspects of leadership that anticipate effectiveness. Another behavioral pattern predicting effective performance by leaders, is that “women are more prone than men to deliver rewards to subordinates for appropriate performance” which is an aspect of the transactional leadership style (Eagly et al. 2003, p. 586). Hence, in some attributes women also demonstrate to be more transactional than men. In summary, it can be stated that females are more predisposed

to engaging in ethical and transformational leadership, compared to males, while this is similarly the case in some key behaviors of the transactional leadership style.

Rohmann and Rowold (2009) communicate that compared to males, female managers are characterized with behaviors that are displayed as generating pride and respect for them, while simultaneously women presented to be a role model that followers consider trustworthy and energetic, together with transmitting a vision through strong communication that exhibits optimism and enthusiasm. Besides, female leaders are described as understanding the requirements and capabilities of each follower better and responding to those individual needs, while at the same time women also encouraged questions that supported the initiation of solving problems more so than their male counterparts (Rohmann and Rowold, 2009). Likewise, women exceeded men on one transactional scale, because they gave their followers rewards for good performance more often than male leaders did as Rohmann and Rowold (2009) pointed out, which lead to the evaluation that female leaders were more effective and satisfying to work with than male leaders. Eagly et al. (2003) share that “women adopted a somewhat more democratic or participative style and a less autocratic or directive style than men did” (p. 570) however, male and female managers did not demonstrate a difference in their proclivity to use interpersonally oriented and task-oriented styles. Anyway, individuals tend to react more negatively when women espouse in an autocratic and directive leadership style than when men adopt this approach (Eagly et al., 2003).

Eagly and Karau differentiate between communal and agentic characteristics, where communal characteristics are more strongly connected to women, because they “describe primarily a concern with the welfare of other people, for example, being affectionate, helpful, kind, sympathetic, interpersonally sensitive, nurturant, and gentle” (2002, p. 574). In contrast, agentic characteristics are stronger related to men, reflecting leaders who employ an “assertive, controlling and confident tendency,” for example attributes like “aggressive, ambitious, dominant, forceful, independent, self-sufficient, self-confident, and prone to act as a leader” (Eagly and Karau, 2002, p. 574). If female leaders engage strongly in an agentic behavior, it generally forms a tendency of negative reaction especially from males. In other words, Eagly and Karau (2002) communicate that, agentic women are perceived as competent but deficient in social skills compared with agentic men. Another connection can be established, that women employ a more democratic, ethical, interpersonally oriented and communal leadership style, which can be associated with transformational leadership attributes, while men show a tendency for transactional leadership, with rather autocratic, task-oriented, and agentic traits.

According to the gender perspective, van Emmerik et al. state that the “leadership behaviors of women include more consideration, whereas the leadership behaviors of men consist of more

initiating structure behaviors” (2008, p. 300). Whereas, “men are believed to be more forceful, dominant, and motivated to master their environment” they are more inclined to use the initiating structure leadership style (van Emmerik et al., 2008, p. 300). In contrast “women are believed to be more concerned with others and more inclined to use the consideration leadership style” as per van Emmerik et al. (2008, p. 300). In summary, female managers exhibit more initiating structure than male managers do. Stereotypical images that female leaders are more relationship oriented and less task-oriented are therefore contradicted. This rather popular stereotype, which however is not verified through evidence, is as van Emmerik et al. argue, used to “prevent women from taking up tough leadership positions, and is sometimes advocated as a female approach to leadership, driving on soft powers” (2008, p. 310).

Hypothesis 1: Gender impacts leadership style - female leaders in top management engage in a more transformational and ethical leadership style, while their male counterparts engage in a more transactional leadership style.

2.3 Culture As A Moderator In Leadership

Globalization becomes a more and more significant factor in the world of business on an international level. Rationale for comparing the United States and Germany is the “strong economic, political, and historical relationship” countries’ (Abdou and Kliche, 2004, p. 9). Furthermore, the United States and Germany prove a “long history of cross-national partnerships and strategic alliances among organizations in their business communities. Economic development in each country has been characterized by periods of both convergence and divergence around forms of managerial capitalism” Martin et al. (2009, p. 128). Strategic alliances, by definition is when “two or more firms contribute their physical, financial, human, and technological resources or expertise to achieve competitive advantage” (Abdou and Kliche, 2004, p. 8). In the paper by Abdou and Kliche it has been mentioned that, “a growing aspect of selecting the right alliance partner is culture” (2004, p. 9). According to Pew Research Center (2015) “economically and geopolitically, the U.S. – German alliance has become the linchpin of the trans-Atlantic relationship in the 21st century.” Deutsche Welle (2017) reports that “in 2016, the US was Germany’s largest export market, with the US president openly criticizing Germany’s trade surplus of 49 billion euros (\$52.3 billion) and threatening to levy excessive import tariffs.” As stated by Deutsche Welle (2017) “parts of the US business community had experienced a decline not because of other nations’ import tariffs, but because some products made in the US had simply not been competitive on global markets any more.” Furthermore, the article by Deutsche Welle (2017) reasons that “German companies could make a vital contribution toward strengthening the manufacturing industry in the US.” The United States and Germany however, “have maintained distinctive cultural norms, values and philosophical frameworks,” as Martin et al. (2009, p. 128)

reason. An example in which problems were caused by cultural differences was in the case of Daimler-Chrysler. Not only contributed these cultural differences to the poor performance of the company, but additionally American influenced management practices were introduced into Daimler-Benz in Germany. Later, the Daimler-Chrysler venture, still finding itself in financial and operational difficulties added a Japanese cultural dimension, the Mitsubishi Motors of Japan (McDonald and Burton, 2002). House et al. reasons that “cultural diversity of employees found in worldwide multinational organizations and presents a substantial challenge with respect to the design of multinational organizations and their leadership” (2004, p. 6).

Culture is defined as the “learned beliefs, values, rules, norms, symbols, and traditions that are common to a group of people” (Northouse, 2013, p. 384). Hofstede defines national culture as “the collective programming of the mind distinguishing the members of one group or category of people from others” (1994, p. 4). This implies how national culture has consciously and subconsciously a great influence on individuals, and their leadership style. The GLOBE Project, standing for Global Leadership and Organizational Effectiveness, by House et al. (2004) surveyed 62 cultures, representing over 17000 middle managers to investigate the impact of culture on leadership. In the GLOBE Project, nine cultural dimensions, used to group societal values and beliefs, are being defined. However, in this research only the three most relevant for this context, humane orientation, assertiveness, and gender egalitarianism, will be used for the comparative analysis. House et al. (2004) defined these cultural dimensions as follow:

Dimension	Definition
Humane Orientation	The degree to which a society encourages and rewards individuals for being fair, altruistic, generous, caring and kind to others.
Assertiveness	The degree to which individuals are assertive, dominant and demanding in their relationships with others.
Gender Egalitarianism	The degree to which a society minimizes gender inequality.

Figure 1: Cultural Dimensions by House et al. (2004)

Findings from Project GLOBE, demonstrate convincingly the “influence of societal culture on shaping implicitly held leadership beliefs (Martin et al., 2009, p. 128). The United States is considered to be an Anglo country and Germany belongs to Germanic Europe. Additionally, GLOBE divides Germany in former East and West, which are however, in regards to cultural practices considered in this study, very similar, as seen in Figure 2 below. Thus, this investigation will count East and West Germany as one country. The data in Figure 2 is being displayed in order

to be consistent with the GLOBE study. Additionally, the GLOBE study provides in depth information regarding the relationship between culture and leadership style, yet does not consider the impact of gender.

GLOBE Culture Visualization			
Measured on a scale from 1 very low to 7 very high.			
Cultural Practices and Values	Country Practice Score USA	Country Practice Score East Germany	Country Practice Score West Germany
Assertiveness	4.55	4.73	4.55
Gender egalitarianism	3.34	3.06	3.10
Humane orientation	4.17	3.40	3.18

Figure 2: Culture Visualization USA, East Germany, West Germany

2.3.1 Humane Orientation

Humane orientation is reflected in ethical and transformational leadership, but also plays a role in the transactional leadership style. The meaning of ethical leadership in Germany and the United States varies. Therefore, the impact and attitudes towards leader ethics differs between Europe and the United States. As reflected in Figure 5, in the United States, humane orientation is slightly higher than in Germany. Martin et al. reason that, “this could be due to the human relationship movement of the 1950s and 1960s” (2009, p. 139). Also the majority of executives indicated that treating people well is an important characteristic of ethical leadership as Martin et al. (2009) mention.

Within Germany, ethical leadership “continues to be largely embedded within organizational system,” wherein leaders are expected to show “trustworthiness, encourage, empower and build confidence in staff to work within the parameters of the system,” while in the United States ethical leadership is dependent on the actions of individuals and not attributes of the social system (Martin et al., 2009, p. 139). The pressures of globalization and the culturally varying styles of ethical leadership obligate organizations and their leaders to constantly reconcile differences in order to eliminate tension. Especially for multinational firms, it is mandatory to follow and sustain standards of ethical conduct globally as managers need to be culturally aware and comprehend cultural divergence in regards to ethical behavior (Martin et al., 2009).

Resick et al. (2006) specifies four dimensions, namely Character/Integrity, Altruism, Collective Motivation and Encouragement, which are widely believed as facilitating effective leadership across cultures, however, substantial variation in the degree of endorsement for each dimension

can be noted. In this context, “integrity is known as the ability to determine the ethically correct course of action in a given situation, as well as the behavior notwithstanding external pressures” (Martin et al., 2009, p. 131). Ethical leaders are according to Martin et al. “altruistic, reflecting a focus on serving the greater good, and collectively oriented while exercising their social power for the collective interests of the group rather than solely for their own personal interests” (2009, p. 131). Moreover, Martin et al. (2009) share that ethical leaders use “collective motivation and inspire followers to contribute to the group’s collective efforts and put the interests of the group ahead of their own,” (p. 131) while additionally ethical leaders are “encouraging and empowering, enabling followers to develop a sense of personal competence and self-efficacy that promotes self-sufficiency” (p. 131).

The study by Martin et al. (2009) concludes that German leaders scored very high in two out of the four ethical leadership dimensions belonging to Altruism, with 85.7 percent for generous and 100 percent in compassionate. The U.S. respondents scored very high in three out of the four aspects, with 83.3 percent in generous and modest, and like German respondents with 100 percent on compassionate. Overall, the United States scored higher or equal to Germany with three out of the four attributes, being modest, fraternal and compassionate. In the Character/Integrity ethical leadership dimension, the U.S. respondents score overall significantly higher compared to the German respondents, with 83.3 percent on three out of the four attributes, being honest, sincere, and trustworthy. German respondents only scored 57.1 percent on honest, just and sincere and 71.4 percent on trustworthy. The United States scored 66.7 percent in just. In the Collective Motivation dimension, the United States clearly scores much higher than Germany in all five attributes with one exception where the countries score equal with 100 percent on confidence builder. On the leader attribute communicative, Germany scores extremely low with 14.3 percent, while the United States scores 83.3 percent. The United States also scores 83.3 percent on team-builder and group-oriented, and 100 percent on motive arouser. Germany’s scores are low with 28.6 percent on group-oriented, 57.1 percent on motive arouser and 28.6 percent on team-builder. On the last ethical leadership dimension, being encouragement, the United States scores 100 percent on encouraging and morale booster, while Germany scores 85.7 percent on both.

German leaders reported lower scores on transformational leadership than U.S. leaders, while also American leaders demonstrated to be more charismatic and inspiring than their German counterparts (Rohmann and Rowold, 2009). The study also mentioned that the biggest difference between Germany and the United States in regards to Hofstede’s cultural value dimensions, were individualism and uncertainty avoidance. Indubitably, the United States scored higher in individualistic behavior while Germany scored higher in uncertainty avoidance (Rohmann and Rowold, 2009).

2.3.2 Assertiveness And Gender Egalitarianism

Nowadays, through globalization, business leaders and managers interact with people from different cultures, beliefs and value systems. Additionally, leaders are facing the challenge of being confronted with diverse personality types within a global workforce. Parham et al. argue that an important character trait strongly influenced by culture and commonly discussed in the business environment is assertiveness, which is referred to as “dominance and considered to be a sub trait of extraversion” (2015, p. 421). It is obvious that the effectiveness of a company’s workforce could be influenced by the degree of assertiveness of its workforce and its leaders. In other words, assertiveness can be interpreted and appreciated distinctly depending on the culture of a country.

Men and women from diverse cultural and ethnical origin may demonstrate a different level of assertiveness than what is expected or considered standard in the country the individual works in. Therefore, it is crucial that managers, especially those leading in a multinational company are aware that many employees may not present the self-assurance or assertiveness anticipated from Anglo-Europeans for example. Ethnicity in this context refers to the “cultural factors, such as nationality, culture, ancestry, language and beliefs” (Parham et al., 2015, p. 421). As defined by Parham et al., assertiveness is behavior, which “enables a person to act in his own best interest, stand up for himself without undue anxiety, to express his rights without destroying the rights of others” (2015, p. 422). Hofstede (1980) reasoned that depending if an individual is from an individualistic/collective culture or masculine/feminine culture, the response to self-reported assertiveness surveys will demonstrate differences. Cultures espousing more feminine values, expect individuals to be more nurturing, modest, and tender, and in contrast cultures that espouse more masculine values expect individuals to be assertive and decisive. Parham et al. claim that “the more educated a person is, the level of assertiveness tends to increase” (2015, p. 424).

When taking a look at American history, the “goal of non-assertive behavior by women and ethnic minorities in Pre-Civil Rights era of the 1960’s was to appreciate others and to avoid conflict and confrontation at all cost” as Parham et al. (2015, p. 425) clarifies. This is a reflection of generations that passed down non-assertive behavior, where non-assertive behavior is defined as “the denial of one’s own personal rights by placing the opinions, feelings, and needs of others before one’s own” Parham et al. (2015, p. 425). According to Parham et al., a “traditionally accepted view is that men are more assertive than women” (2015, p. 425). Their research confirms this argument and adds that males are not only more assertive but also have higher self-esteem than females in the global community (Parham et al., 2015). Further foregoing studies affirm that there is no gender difference between men and women in the level of assertiveness (Hyde, 1990), while additional past investigations found that in some situations women were more assertive than men (Chandler

et al., 1978). In line with the traditionally accepted view, Parham's et al. empirical research proves that, "men on average are more assertive than women, and the degree of assertiveness demonstrated is a key part of masculine persona" (2015, p. 426). Later on, the research by Parham et al. (2015) explored the "larger social environment of women on the trait of assertiveness," (p. 426) resulting in a contradiction of their previous statement, as the new finding indicate that "the scores women receive on assertiveness have increased such that there is no gender difference notable" (p. 426).

It can be reasoned that the level of assertiveness of women is related to their status outside the home (Parham et al., 2015). Clearly, assertiveness is linked to work and status, where status comes from education. This phenomenon can be seen over the past 70 years on American women, while in this current era, "more women are working outside the home and more have obtained graduate and professional degrees than any other time in history" as Parham et al. (2015, p. 426) shares. Expressed in other terms, "women are closing the gap with men in regards to assertiveness and are actually gaining assertiveness" (Parham et al., 2015, p. 426). Likewise, "changing attitudes toward women's roles in society have led to shifts in activities related to women, and these roles lead to personality changes" (Parham et al., 2015, p. 426). This is also reflected in leadership. Females operating in "male-dominated environments are expected to utilize leadership styles that conform to masculine cultures to maintain their status" (Herrera et al., 2012, p. 38)

Assertiveness as one of the cultural practices and values defined by GLOBE and analyzed in this investigation makes a significant contribution to this content. The level of assertiveness of men and women varies depending on cultural expectations and norms of a country. Nevertheless, this is a main value recognized in multinational companies and business environments operating cross-culturally. The level of a leaders' assertiveness impacts his/her leadership style and effectiveness as well. Ames states that "task or initiating structure behaviors – including assertively defining goals and issuing work commands – are important for effective leadership" (2009, p. 118). A study by Judge and Kammeyer-Mueller reasons that "individuals with higher levels of core self-evaluations will undertake different leadership behaviors than those with lower levels of core self-evaluations" (2011, p. 336). The research also argues that "groups led by transformational leaders tend to show higher levels of performance" (Judge and Kammeyer-Mueller, 2011, p. 336). Judge and Kammeyer-Mueller state that "leaders who are higher in core self-evaluations will also be able to set ambitious goals for followers" (2011, p. 336). Therefore, the investigation highlights a link between core self-evaluations and leadership.

Judge and Kammeyer-Mueller state that "high core self-evaluations should be more ethical, and

more interested in promoting an ethical culture, because ethical leadership rests not only on the embodiment of integrity, but in the willingness to be proactive (communicating, rewarding, punishing, and emphasizing ethical standards) in positively influencing followers” (2011, p. 338). According to Ames (2009), the level of assertiveness will be adjusted according to the given situation, as this will enhance effectiveness. The research also explains that depending on the situation, the level of interpersonal assertiveness varies, forming a fitting behavior. Ames mentions that there is “evidence that many managers struggle to calibrate their behavior in this way, often showing elevated or depressed levels of assertiveness across domains despite the apparent benefits of a contingent approach” (2009, p. 118). In summary, when analyzing leadership styles of females and males in upper management in two different cultural contexts, it is significant to evaluate assertiveness, as this behavior indicates the leadership style of a manager. Furthermore, the level of assertiveness in a given situation could demonstrate changes in a top-level manager’s leadership style depending on the context he/she is required to be an effective leader in.

Hypothesis 2a: *Cultural dimensions impact leadership style: higher level of assertiveness indicates a more transactional leadership style and increased effectiveness; a higher score on humane orientation and gender egalitarianism indicates a more transformational and ethical leadership style.*

Hypothesis 2b: *Leaders in the United States score higher on humane orientation and on assertiveness when compared to German leaders.*

Hypothesis 2c: *Leaders in the United States are expected to score higher in gender egalitarianism than leaders in Germany.*

2.3.3 Gender, Culture, Leadership Style

It can be confirmed that female managers employ the consideration style more, although women also use more initiating structure (van Emmerik et al., 2008). “Gender differences in managerial behavior are predominantly present in western societies” as van Emmerik et al. (2008, p. 297) claim. Evidently, classic gender stereotypes in regards to managerial behaviors are being contradicted, since “female managers score higher on consideration and on initiating structure than male managers” (van Emmerik et al., 2008, p. 300). The cultural background is related with consideration, yet particularly prominent in the initiating structure, while the respective “contribution of cultural background to initiating structure is greater than for gender” (van Emmerik et al., 2008, p. 310). Therefore, differences in managerial behavior due to gender seem to be moderate.

In the United States and in Germany, women have a more transformational leadership style than men (Rohmann and Rowold, 2009). The strengthening egalitarian role division reflects a reason of why gender difference is decreasing and at the same time globalization gradually eliminates divergence caused by cultural backgrounds (van Emmerik et al., 2008). "Female managers worldwide combine soft with hard leadership behaviors," providing a reason why one might speculate that "female managers actually do a better job worldwide, as they deploy both more consideration and more initiating structure" (van Emmerik et al., 2008, p. 310). Similarly, women engage in transformational as well as transactional leadership. Specifically in Anglo and Germanic clusters, "the gender effect is present," where "interactions showed that the relationship with consideration was stronger for women than for men" as per van Emmerik et al. (2008, p. 310).

Gartzia and Baniandrés explain, that "followers prefer considerate leaders but will perform more effectively for structuring leaders" (2016, p. 513). In addition, Gartzia and van Engen analyze androgyny and leadership effectiveness in an investigation confirming that "androgynous leaders are evaluated more favorably and perceived as more transformational than other leaders" (2012, p. 301). Androgynous leadership is defined as "leaders who identify with both instrumental and expressive traits" (Gartzia and van Engen, p. 298). Furthermore, "the masculinity of leader stereotypes is perceived as decreasingly important for successful leadership, with leadership roles shifting to a more androgynous definition" (Gartzia and van Engen, 2012, p. 301). Gartzia and van Engen find that "individuals who are able to go beyond gender stereotypes are to identify with both stereotypically feminine and stereotypically masculine traits (i.e. androgynous) are potentially the most effective leaders" (2012, p. 307). Gartzia and van Engen argue that "androgynous leaders also show higher scores in transformational leadership" (2012, p. 309). Interestingly, Gartzia and Baniandrés state that "there is not only a leadership stereotype that coincides with stereotypically masculine characteristics, for example being non people-oriented, but also that stemming from such stereotype both male and female leaders who are overly people-oriented are perceived as less effective in task-related outcomes" (2016, p. 514).

This study is being developed in order to achieve a more specified framework, in which only Fortune 500 companies are included for example, basing the investigation on the size of companies regarding annual profit. Simultaneously this investigation categorizes three different types of leadership styles, being transactional, transformational and ethical, focusing on two cultural context with an in depth comparison between Germany and the United States.

Hypothesis 3: Culture moderates the relationship between gender and leadership style - leaders in the U.S. are inclined to engaging in the ethical and transformational leadership style, while leaders in Germany are leaning towards employing the ethical and transactional leadership style.

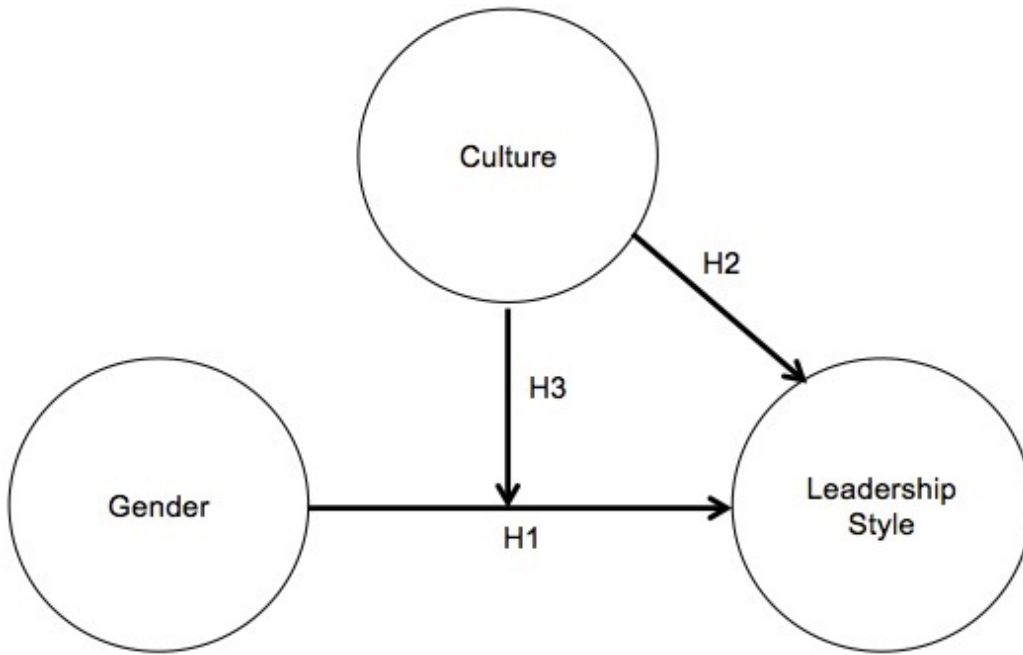


Figure 3: Conceptual Model – General Hypothesis

3. Methodology

Process:

For this research, the proposed methodology is a quantitative research. Data collection will be in form of a survey. The questionnaire will be developed based on an in depth revision of literature, reviewed by a specialized professor and tested for its reliability and validity. The finalized survey will be send electronically to the top managers of each of the 500 largest, measured by total revenue, firms in the United States and in Germany, with the objective to analyze how gender impacts leadership style and what effect culture has on this relationship. Therefore, the survey will be translated into German and English, the sample countries' official languages, and proved for accuracy prior to being distributed by email.

Sample:

The total sample size for this study will be $n = 500$ top managers of the largest 500 firms in the United States and $n = 500$ top managers of the largest 500 firms in Germany. The total sample size of top managers surveyed is $n = 1000$ in the United States and Germany total. Top managers in this study are the highest-ranking executives, such as chief executive officer, president, chairman/chairwoman, and executive director. All companies considered in this study are the firms with the 500 highest revenues per annum in each of the two countries, being the United States and Germany. Also, the organizations are eligible for analysis only if either the company has its headquarters in on of the two countries or operates in the United States or Germany, with at least 50 percent ownership in the nation the firm is run.

The questionnaire is to be completed exclusively by top managers fulfilling the description provided previously or their assistant or secretary. All respondents with missing data will be excluded. These requirements serve for originality purposes and response accuracy. Periodical follow-up emails will be sent every 30 days to the top managers and/or their assistant or secretary in case, the survey has not been completed within 90 days after the initial distribution by email.

Variables:

The survey is divided into four subsections and will entail clear instructions for completion along with a detailed description of the research objective and contribution. Subdivision one will inquire about key facts of the firm, including sector of the business and country. Subsection two, will inquire about demographic information of the leader completing the survey, such as gender, age, level of education, current position, years of experience in upper management, years in current position at that company, and years at the company. For completion of the survey, data ranges will

be provided to select, for example for age the division will be: 25-34 years, 35-44 years, 45-54 years, 55-64 years and 65+ years. Subsection three will investigate about the leader's behavior in management, which ultimately will define the leadership style he or she engages in. The leadership styles evaluated in this study are transformational, transactional and ethical leadership. Items used to measure transformational, transactional and ethical leadership style will be formulated in statements, which will be evaluated with a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The validated scale to measure transformational and transactional leadership styles in this research will be the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire by Avolio and Bass (2004), while the validated scale to measure ethical leadership in this research will be the Ethical Leadership Scale (ELS) by Yukl et al. (2013). Subsection four will consider culture. The cultural dimensions, humane orientation, assertiveness and gender egalitarianism, defined by House et al. (2004) will be used as variables to evaluate the effect of culture in the United States and in Germany on gender and leadership style. As in subsection three, the items applied to evaluate cultural attributes will be formulated in statements including variables that are assigned under each of the three selected cultural dimensions, which will be as before, evaluated with a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The IBM SPSS AMOS program will be used to analyze and evaluate the obtained data, similarly as in the research by van Emmerik et al. (2008). The proposed methodology has been applied comparably in research by van Emmerik et al. (2008) and Rohmann and Rowold (2009).

4. Conclusion and Future Research

The expected outcomes of this research are that gender impacts leadership style, wherein female leaders in top management positions are more transformational and ethical than their male counterparts but also engage in more of the contingent reward behaviors that are a component of transactional leadership. Male leaders were generally more likely to exhibit the other aspects of transactional leadership. German leaders are expected to be less transformational than their American counterparts.

Moreover, it is presumed that culture is moderating the relationship between gender and leadership style, where culture demonstrates a stronger impact on leadership behaviors than gender, particularly on the transformational and ethical leadership style. It is expected that female transformational and ethical leaders in the United States score slightly higher in humane orientation when compared to German female leaders in upper management. Male transactional leaders in the United States are expected to score higher on the cultural dimension assertiveness, in comparison to German male leaders. Lastly, male and female transformational, transactional and ethical leaders in the United States and in Germany are predicted to demonstrate only modest variances in gender egalitarianism. Regardless, female leaders are clearly underrepresented in top management in the international world of business. Despite moderate differences in the three cultural dimensions discussed, overall, in the United States and in Germany, women leaders in the international business environment in large firms, seem to have a more transformational and ethical leadership style than men. Anyhow, gender differences are anticipated to decline due to more egalitarian role division, while simultaneously globalization is diminishing dissimilarities caused by cultural background.

This study is expected to provide theoretical implications with the motive to contribute to filling the gap of gender conditioning leadership style in a defined geographical context, the United States and Germany, where culture acts as a moderator between the relationship of gender and leadership style. Furthermore, while the GLOBE study analyzes the relationship between culture and leadership thoroughly, the impact of gender has not been taken into account. Managerial implications are directed at leaders managing in highly competitive firms globally, where cultural awareness is a crucial factor in order to lead a diverse workforce effectively in the international business environment. Furthermore, this study may provide useful information for managerial training programs focusing on international management and leadership, specifically for organizations operating between the two cultural settings of Germany and the United States.

Possible limitations of this study could be a lower than expected final total response rate. Also, the effect of globalization, macroeconomic and socioeconomic characteristics have not been considered in depth in this research and may be subject to change in the future as globalization may flatten cultural differences in the long run. In that case, the investigation would need to be repeated. Therefore, a recommendation for future research is to analyze the impact of globalization on the evolution of gender conditioning leadership style along with culture as a moderator between the relationship of gender and leadership style in the United States and Germany. Furthermore, due to the specific geographical context of this study, generalizability of this research is limited. It has not yet been proven if the obtained results can be applied to all international business leadership environments in Anglo and Germanic European nations. This could demonstrate a valuable contribution for possible future research too.

This research is relevant especially as globalization is becoming an increasingly important topic in today's world of business. The current generation of researchers and young professionals need to incorporate an international mindset and cultural awareness as one of the fundamental requirements in management. Cross cultural business interaction and communication are close to inevitable nowadays where cultural awareness becomes a significant aspect in order to solidify a strong and efficient leadership profile. The main inspiration for this research topic was the importance of gender equality in leadership positions.

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