

Gender Roles and Female Leaders: Abstract

Though the idea of feminism has been advocated since the eighteenth century, women still face subordination because of their supposed gender roles. This study focuses on the effects of widely accepted gender roles and stereotypes on the ability of women in attaining positions of leadership, specifically in the fields of politics and business. A qualitative research method was employed in order to gain more abstract and personal data. Women in the spheres of business and politics were interviewed. Interviewees were required to sign a participant consent form before participation in accordance with the proceedings of the Institutional Review Board. Three women in the field of business and two in the field of politics were interviewed. The solicited information would outline these women's experiences in attaining positions of leadership and reflections on present difficulties due to gender-related discrepancies. The interviews were conducted over the phone (with the exception of one that was done via email) for the convenience of the interviewees and to allow for immediate responses. These interviews were recorded, with the consent of the participants, and transcribed. It was assumed that the participants possessed knowledge regarding the glass ceiling and gender roles, and had experienced a difference in treatment because of their gender. Limitations of the research were that the interviewees' workplaces were exposed to similar cultural values and, if more time were allotted, a wider pool of participants could have been interviewed. The participants generally expressed that while the impact of gender roles in the workplace did not seem too extreme, they did tend to face negative influences of gender roles and stereotypes. These women emphasized that there is a need for reform in the workplace because of differing treatment in the workplace centered around gender.

This research took approximately eight months to complete. I was the sole researcher for this study, as it was done for my AP Capstone Research course. There was a facilitator in the classroom and I did have a consultant who was competent in the field of social sciences.