Implicit Association of Gender and Leadership in Healthcare

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Implicit Association of Gender and Leadership in Healthcare

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Intro/Background

This study is aimed at examining the perception of women in leadership positions in medicine. As women now make up the majority of the workforce in the medical field, this is quickly becoming a topic of discussion amongst many communities. However, we continuously find that in executive and leadership roles there is a large imbalance. Women in these leadership roles can be considered to be the minority in many institutions, where men make up 62 percent of full-time faculty and women only 38 percent. This percentage difference only becomes wider as the potential roles become more advanced and the top echelons of medicine are reached. Only 24 percent of senior executives, 18 percent of hospital CEOs, and 14 percent of boards of directors are women. There is a common knowledge of these imbalances within the medical field. However, current actions and policies recommendations are severely lacking. The potential barriers to women’s advancement to higher leadership professions are numerous.

To date, similar studies have been performed on the general population. However, no such studies have been completed with medical students. The current study attempts to gain knowledge on the existing biases regarding gender and leadership to indicate knowledge gaps, in order to inform future action.

Study Objectives

To this end, the study has 2 aims, to gather information about: (a) The implicit association and beliefs of medical students about gender and leadership; (b) medical student reaction to their implicit associations.

Methods and Analysis

This was a prospective study that went through the University of South Florida IRB approval. All medical students at the Morsani College of Medicine received an email where they had access to the survey (table 1). The study was piloted by Morsani College of Medicine medical students, who were excluded from the results. There were 26 males and 45 females who completed the study with an average age of 26.3 for Males and 25.7 for Females. Ethnicity, field of interest, household demographics, and highest level of education of mother and father were collected (table 1). The gender-leadership implicit association test (IAT) questions were from a previous study in the literature by Dasgupta N., Asgari S, 2004 (table 1). A Fisher’s exact, Mann-Whitney U, and study in the literature by Dasgupta N., Asgari S, 2004 collected (table 1). The gender-leadership implicit associations.

To this end, the study has 2 aims, to gather information about: (a) The implicit association and beliefs of medical students about gender and leadership; (b) medical student reaction to their implicit associations.

Results

To this end, the study has 2 aims, to gather information about: (a) The implicit association and beliefs of medical students about gender and leadership; (b) medical student reaction to their implicit associations.

Table 1: Study Questionnaire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you think there is any bias on promoting individuals to leadership positions based on gender? Percentage of times each gender mentioned topic. Female N=44, Male N=30</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>P value Compared to Gender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think there is any bias on promoting individuals to leadership positions based on gender? Percentage of times each gender mentioned topic. Female N=44, Male N=30</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>P value Compared to Gender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 2. Do you think there is any bias on promoting individuals to leadership positions based on gender? Percentage of times each gender mentioned topic. Female N=44, Male N=30</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>P value Compared to Gender</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.

Table 3.

Table 3. What do you think the results would be in general population? for Physicians? Percentage of times each gender mentioned topic. Female N=69, Male=43 (N= number of times topic mentioned).

Conclusion

Male medical students, on average, hold substantially stronger explicit and implicit leader-are-male stereotypes than do female students. Male and female students also held differing perspectives to why there is bias in promoting individuals to leadership positions and generalizability of the gender-leader bias to the general population and physicians. This could be influenced by environmental inputs. This survey will provide a useful tool for measuring the explicit and implicit association of gender and leadership and can track changes over time. In addition, the survey can be used to raise awareness about implicit associations. The ultimate goal is to facilitate a positive culture to promote more women in leadership positions.