Culturally Universal or Culturally Specific: A Comparative Study of the Anticipated Female Leadership Styles in Taiwan and the United States

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Culturally Universal or Culturally Specific: A Comparative Study of the Anticipated Female Leadership Styles in Taiwan and the US

Abstract: Guided by Bass and Avolio’s leadership frameworks and Hofstede’s modified cultural dimensions, the present cross-cultural study aims to compare and explore the relationships between cultural values and anticipated female leadership styles in non-profit organizations in Taiwan and the US. Regression and t-test analyses of 307 participants in 138 Rotary Clubs in the two societies reveal two research findings. First, Rotary Club members in Taiwan have higher scores in all the cultural dimensions of collectivism, masculinity, and life-long relationships than their US counterparts. Second, transformational leadership proves to be the most anticipated leadership style among Rotary Club members in both cultures. Our research findings indicate that culture alone cannot account for the anticipated female leadership styles. Therefore, a combination of Bass’s (1997) culturally universal and Hofstede’s (1994) culturally specific approaches is proposed to tackle more variables in future female leadership studies.

Keywords: anticipated female leadership styles, cultural dimensions, Rotary Clubs

In the past several decades, great progress has been witnessed in the empowerment of women in the business world and in the political arena. In the business world, according to Wu and Hsieh (2006), Indian-born Indra Nooyi was promoted to chief executive officer (CEO) of PepsiCo in 2006, and Irene Rosenfeld became the CEO of Kraft Foods, the world’s second largest food producer. The famous CEO of Hewlett-Packard (HP), Carly Fiorina, is another example of top female business executives. She was elected as the most powerful woman in business in 1998 and 1999 by Fortune magazine. Scot and Brown (2006) also noted that women hold 30% of the managerial positions in Europe, 36% in Canada, and 37% in the United States. In comparison, women in Taiwan own 33.87% of the enterprises and run 10% of the large-sized companies, and they “are as good as their counterparts in the developed societies such as the United States and Canada” (Wang, 2007, p. 1). With each passing year, there are more and more well-known female representatives, not only in the fields of business, but politics as well.

For instance, there are six female Prime Ministers and nine female Presidents worldwide.
Specifically, Germany elected its first female chancellor, Angela Merkel, in 2005; South Korea gained its first female Prime Minister, Han Myeong-sook, in 2006; and in the same year the United States elected its first female speaker of the House, Nancy Pelosi. As for Taiwan, Lu Hsiu-lien was elected as Vice President in 2000 and 2004, which “marked the beginning of a new era of party change, and rule shared by both men and women in Taiwan” (Government Information Office, 2007, p. 1). In terms of female parliamentarians, Taiwan’s ratio was 22.2 % or 31st in the world. Taiwan’s Gender Related Development Index (GDI) in 2000 was 0.888, ranking 23rd in the world and at the top of Asia’s “four little dragons” (Taiwan, South Korea, Hong Kong, and Singapore) (Wu & Hsieh, 2006).

However, there is still a long way to go to achieve gender equality. Equality here does not necessarily mean that women and men must be the same in all circumstances. What should be emphasized is the realization of the full potential of men and women, and the full consideration of their interests, needs, and priorities. In other words, the opportunities, rights, and responsibilities of women and men do not depend on whether they are born female or male. In actuality, the progress for women “while steady, has been painfully slow” (Chen et al., 2005, p. 1).

In the US, as Mather (2007) reported, although women currently account for nearly one-half of the total US labor force, only one-fourth of them are in the science and engineering labor force. Pynes (2000) also noted that women made up just 16% of the chief executives in the nation, and their median salary was almost $30,000 less than that of the average male executives in one survey of 188 of the US largest non-profit organizations. The results of another study involving 100 non-profit organizations showed that female board members accounted for 23% of the board, and nine of the boards examined had no female members. According to Falk and
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Grizard (2005), in American Fortune 500 companies, females occupied just 13.6% of managerial positions. In other corporations, only 16% of the managers were women, and they held just 4% of senior managerial positions. Obviously, “men were disproportionately represented in upper-level management and earn higher salaries than women at all levels of the organization” (Pynes, 2000, p. 35).

In Taiwan, the rate of female participation in business and politics also lags behind that of men and that of other developed areas around the world. Within Taiwan proper, the number of females accounts for just 16% of managerial and administrative positions. The ratio of female to male administrators and managers is relatively low (Wu & Hsieh, 2006). To sum up, it is true that female political and economic status has been promoted because of equal rights efforts and education. However, female participation rates in public affairs and decision-making positions are still quite low.

Therefore, we undertook a comparative quantitative study specifically on female leadership in non-profit organizations in the diverse cultural contexts of the US and Taiwan. Although Dorfman and House (2004) emphasized the importance of conducting leadership studies in different cultures, we kept fully aware of Denmark’s (1993) caveat that “by ignoring gender as a variable in studying leadership, researchers created many blanks in theoretical and research design” (p. 345). House (1995) also remarked that about 98% of leadership theory emanates from the United States; therefore, Bass (1995) urged that there has been a need for research in more culturally diverse settings as most leadership research has used samples merely from Western cultures. Since there have been very few studies comparing female leadership in non-profit organizations in different countries or cultures in communication studies, we aimed to fill in this void by conducting a comparative and cross-cultural study on the impact of cultural
values upon the anticipated female leadership styles in non-profit organizations in Taiwan and
the US. To this end, the research question guiding this study is:

RQ: What are the cultural values that affect Rotary Club members’ anticipated female
leadership styles? And what are the best predictors of leadership style anticipations?

In the following sections, we first present the literature review, theoretical framework,
and the developed hypotheses. We then describe the data used to test these hypotheses and report
our research results. Finally, we discuss how cultural dimensions are associated with anticipated
female leadership styles and what the implications mean behind the numbers.

Literature Review

The study of leadership has a long history with abundant scholarship both in China and
the United States. According to Chang (2008), the study of different leadership styles in China
began to be recorded in historical documents 2,500 years ago. In the US, however, there have
been more profound and comprehensive scholarships on leadership in the past several decades.
For instance, there have been more than 7,500 studies relevant to leadership in the social and
science literature in the United States (Aldoory & Toth, 2004). For the purpose of this study, we
will briefly review the Chinese and American scholarships on leadership in terms of cultural
values, gender, and leadership styles in the following section.

Cultural Values

Cultural values guide people’s behavior and leadership styles reflect cultural values
Research has also shown that cultural values influence leadership behaviors (Booysen, 1999,
defined value as “a conception, explicit or implicit, distinctive of an individual or characteristic
of a group, of the desirable which influences the selection from available modes, means, and
ends of action” (p. 395). Hofstede (1980a) added that a value is “a broad tendency to prefer to certain states of affairs over others” (p. 19). Martin and Nakayama (2007) further indicated that cultural values are the worldview of a cultural group or the core symbols of a particular identity. For example, individualism is often cited as one of the most important Euro-American values, as reflected in the emphasis on participative leadership. In the case of Taiwan, although studies show that the current generation is more individualistic than older generations, the traditional value of collectivism is still the core symbol of the Taiwanese culture and social structure, as reflected in the preference in authoritarian leadership (Wu & Stewart, 2005). In sum, all of the above scholars agreed that values form the core of culture and cultural values exert impact upon leadership styles.

**Leadership Styles**

Leadership can be described as processes that not only influence members to recognize and agree with what needs to be done and how it can be done effectively but also facilitate individual and collective efforts to accomplish the shared goals and visions (Yukl, 2002). In addition, according to Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, and Engen (2003), leadership styles are the relatively appropriate patterns of behavior applied by leaders. Based on their multifactor leadership questionnaire, Eagly et al. (2003) further summarized and described three major leadership styles based on their multifactor leadership questionnaire. First, transformational leaders tend to bring about change in organizations and establish oneself as a role model by gaining the followers’ trust. Transactional leaders, however, usually appeal to subordinates’ self-interest through establishing exchange relationships with them. Finally, leaders following the laissez-faire style are often found failing to take responsibility for what they are managing.

As for the Chinese leadership styles in Taiwan, according to scholars (Chang, 2008; Chen,
Beck, & Amos, 2005), they not only had their basis in the philosophies of Legalism, Taoism, and Confucianism, but also integrated contemporary Western theories of leadership into actual practice. As a result, leadership styles in Taiwan demonstrate three frame orientations: director, parent, and mentor. Originated from Legalism, the features of the director leadership style are legality, strategy, and position. Parent leadership style is based on Taoism, so leaders and followers form emotional relationships that function like a family to a great extent. Finally, the mentor leadership style reflects the influence of Confucianism, and leader-led relationships are similar to mentor-learner dynamics with such features as guiding, sharing, and inspiring.

It is not hard to see from the above that differences in cultural values in Taiwan and the US shape different leadership styles. While frequent exchanges in all social sectors between the two peoples have brought about more and more commonalities, there still exist substantial discrepancies in leadership styles in the two societies. As this study specifically addresses female leadership styles, it is crucial to examine the relevant scholarships on gender and leadership styles.

**Gender and Leadership Styles**

With regard to the relationship between gender and leadership styles, many studies (Aldoory & Toth, 2004; Bass & Avolio, 1997; Eagly, 2007; Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt & Engen, 2003; Morgan, 2006) indicated that there is a significant difference between male and female leadership styles. In 1991, the International Women's Forum (IWF) conducted a survey and discovered that male supervisors tend to adopt a transactional leadership style, which means that men would give nominal rewards when subordinates do something right and punish them if they do something wrong. Female supervisors, by contrast, tend to use a transformational leadership style, which means that the leader will achieve the company’s major goals by actively interacting
with subordinates, encouraging employee involvement in decision making, sharing authority and information, respecting employee self-value and encouraging employees to love their jobs.

Bass and Avolio (1997) indicated that the development tendency of US organizations may contribute to the exhibition and emphasis of female leadership styles. Female leaders may use more transformational leadership skills than male leaders, which make a positive impact on the performance of an individual, group, and organization. Morgan (2006) also remarked, organizations that are shaped by male value systems emphasize logical, linear modes of thought and action, and drive for productivity at the cost of network and community building. In contrast, organizations that are shaped by female value systems tend to “balance and integrate the rational-analytic mode with values that emphasize more empathic, intuitive, organic forms of behavior” (p. 131). Chao and Ha (2007) reconfirmed the above study results in their qualitative study which examined top female leaders in the US cable industry and found that these female leaders demonstrated a common use of the transformational leadership style and integrating conflict management strategy.

Based on their meta-analysis of 45 studies of transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles, Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, and Engen (2003) added, female leadership styles are more transformational and women leaders are more likely to use rewards for appropriate performance from subordinates. Thus, compared with their male counterparts, female leaders are “more focused on those aspects of leadership that predict effectiveness” (p. 586). However, women and men do not enjoy equal access to opportunities of leadership, and they may be treated differently even if they are in leadership positions. Just as Eagly (2007) described, women “are still portrayed as suffering disadvantages in access to leadership positions as well as prejudice and resistance when they occupy these roles” (p. 1). The fact is that in the US today,
women are often considered secondary in competitions to obtain leadership positions though research findings prove that women have “the right combination of skills for leadership, yielding superior leadership styles and outstanding effectiveness” (p. 1).

From the above, it can be inferred that the issues concerning gender and leadership styles are very extensive; one single factor is not sufficient to make a thorough study. Besides gender, factors affecting leadership styles may include management level, organizational style, work ambiance (such as departmental heterogeneity and team members’ gender), industrial type, size, and company policy (Van Engen et al., 2001). It is also clear that the bulk of the leadership literature reflects Western industrialized culture; even Hofstede’s study (1980a) used subjects from a large US multinational corporation with a strong American culture. It is likely that most leadership scholarships are culture-bound, reflecting US values and beliefs. Therefore, putting a cross-cultural study of female leadership styles on the agenda has become all the more necessary. The review of relevant scholarships in the above sections also shows that the leadership style of female supervisors is turning to the trend of transformational leadership. Due to the development and the popularity of non-profit organizations, competition among similar organizations has become more severe, and the pressure resulting from such competition inevitably creates conflicts among members. As the number of females who are either involved in or lead non-profit organizations is rapidly increasing, how females cope with challenges, especially in male-dominated organizations is an issue worth studying.

**Theoretical Frameworks and Hypotheses**

To search for the answers to our research question, we modified Hofstede’s cultural dimensions (1984, 1994, 2001b) and adopted Bass and Avolio’s leadership notions (1997) as the theoretical frameworks.
Cultural Dimensions and Hypothesis One

We used Hofstede’s cultural theory not only because he was one of the major researchers, who studied over 100,000 employees in more than 40 countries to increase intercultural understanding and has been linked most clearly to communication behavior but also because his cultural dimensions are still widely used for analyses of phenomena pertaining to different cultures (Arrindell, Steptoe & Wardle, 2003). However, Hofstede’s theory of cultural dimensions has sparked criticism over the years. For instance, according to Soendergaard (1994), the use of employees of one company as a foundation for conclusions about national dimensions was questionable. Baskerville (2003) also questioned the use of countries as a unit of cultural analysis.

In order to minimize cultural bias, we, therefore, modified Hofstede’s cultural dimensions and developed more culturally specific scale items. Two of Hofstede’s dimensions (Power Distance and Uncertainty Avoidance) are not adopted for this study for a couple of reasons. First, there is less power distance in non-profit organizations since non-profit organization members tend to follow self-governing and voluntary models, and everyone is supposed to be equal in such settings. Second, according to Howell (1988), the items of uncertainty avoidance index reflect three different constructs. Wu and Stewart (2005) added that the dimension of uncertainty avoidance is not statistically reliable. Apart from this, we also expanded Hofstede’s cultural dimension of Long-Term Orientation (or Confucian Work Dynamics) by operationalizing it as “Customs/Value Priorities” and Life-Long/Work-Related Relationships.” The essential dimensions which serve as the focus of the study are defined below:

Collectivism/Individualism. This dimension, collectivism vs. individualism, investigates how people value themselves and their groups/organizations. For instance, organizational goals
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are more important than individual goals in collectivistic cultures. According to Hofstede (1980a), differences between Eastern and Western cultures regarding individualism-collectivism have been found. Many Eastern cultures (e.g., China and Korea) tend to have high scores in collectivism, while numerous Western cultures (e.g., the United States and Canada) are more oriented to individualism.

Masculinity/Femininity. The second dimension, masculinity vs. femininity, refers to the gender roles in cultures. In high feminine cultures, men and women are treated equally; in highly masculine organizations, however, there may be a “labyrinth” for females to pass through a tortuous, demanding, and exhausting path in order to move upward (Eagly & Carli, 2007).

Customs and value priorities. Hofstede and Bond (1988) proposed the dimension, long-term orientation or Confucian work dynamics. As we mentioned previously, this dimension has been expanded to the dimensions of “Customs/Value Priorities” and “Life-Long Relationships.” Smith and Schwartz (1997) claimed that the customs and value priorities that are prevalent in a society are key elements in its culture to relate to all aspects of an individual’s behavior. It is well known that Confucianism, which represents the essential Chinese value priorities such as the concepts of face and ren qing, has played an important role in Asian countries over many thousands of years. Thus, customs and values are well-suited for examining the ongoing process of cultural changes in the dynamic social context of the world.

According to Hu and Grove (1991), there are two basic categories of face in the Chinese culture: lian and mianzi. A person’s lian can be preserved by faithful compliance with ritual and social norms. One gains lian by displaying moral character, but when one loses lian, he/she cannot function properly in the community because respect is lost. However, mianzi, represents a more Western conception of face, a reputation, or respect achieved through success in life. Thus,
while Americans may prefer not to embarrass themselves or others in public, they will not
generally go as far as Chinese do to avoid embarrassment. As a Chinese saying goes, a person
needs face like a tree needs bark (ren yao lian; shu yao pi). The saying expresses the meaning
that a person’s self-esteem is often formed on the basis of others’ remarks.

In the Chinese culture, ren qing coupled with bao manage in different types of
interpersonal transactions. A person who understands ren qing knows how to reciprocate (bao).
Therefore, the receiver of ren qing will not reject the provider’s requests because a person who is
indebted to ren qing needs to pay back. A well-known Chinese saying, “You honor me a plum,
and I will in return honor you a peach,” attests to this principle of reciprocity. To illustrate, if one
were given a favor or a gift, one would immediately be in a double-bind situation: rejecting it
would be rude and disruptive to the harmony of the relationship; accepting it, however, would
put one in an only “yes” condition (i.e., unable to decline a request from the gift provider for a
favor). Also, if one fails to reciprocate, one is perceived as heartless. Americans, by contrast, do
not view the give-and-take as a relationship building instrument or social investments (Zhu,
1990).

*Life-long/Work-related relationships.* Since social interactions in Chinese cultures involve
dynamic relationships, this important Chinese value is one of the cultural dimensions of the
present study. Friendship-support relationships (or Guanxi in Chinese) are increasingly complex
relationships, which expand day by day, throughout the entire lives of the Chinese. To the
Chinese, it is essential to create connections (or la guanxi) between people who have a mutually
dependent relationship in their daily life. To do so, the Chinese may use some strategies such as
showing care, giving a gift, or offering a favor (Hwang, 1991). In contrast to the social patterns
in Western societies, especially the US, these relationships continue long after the groups
dissolve. Except within some families, Americans generally avoid relationships of mutual
dependence. Even though Americans have the notion of “networking,” it involves more limited
obligations than “guanxi.” Networking may require getting acquainted with people who are in a
position to give information and perhaps help in areas related to gaining employment or
promotion in a job and to carry out work-related responsibilities (Hwang, 1990). Thus, people in
one’s network are not anticipated to provide assistance in a wide range of aspects of life as in
guanxi; they are anticipated to take care of themselves (Bond et al., 1993). Therefore, the
different concepts of relationship are worthy of examination in this study.

In addition to the above rationale, Hofstede (2001b) further revealed, the American
business culture is characterized by very low long term orientation (score: 29) but high
masculinity (score: 62) and individualism (score: 91). In contrast, Taiwan has very high long
term orientation (score: 87), moderate masculine (score: 45), and low individualism (score: 17)
(p. 500).

Given the above rationale and previous research findings, our first hypothesis was:

H1: Cultural value dimensions significantly differ between Taiwan and the US as
represented by Rotary Club members.

Leadership Framework Hypotheses Two and Three

Apart from Hofstede’s cultural dimensions, we also adopted Bass and Avolio’s full range
leadership notions, including transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles
as our theoretical frameworks. Transformational and transactional leadership styles were first
developed by Burns (1978) and expanded by Bass (Bass, 1985; Sadler, 2003). According to
Burns (1978), traditional leadership emphasizes transactions and is thus called transactional
leadership. This type of leadership relationship is based on an exchange process; a leader offers a
reward in exchange for the employees’ efforts. Transactional leadership is represented by four behavioral elements: Contingent Rewards, Active Management by Exception, Passive Management by Exception and Laissez-Faire. In Contingent Rewards, leaders reinforce the loyalty of subordinates for accomplishing job goals by using contingent rewards. As for Active Management by Exception, leaders are vigilant for any variations beyond regulations and standards and are ready to take action. In Passive Management by Exception, in contrast, leaders intervene only when standards are not fulfilled. Nevertheless, in Laissez-Faire style, leaders will give up their authority and avoid making decisions (Robbins, 2001; Yukl, 2002).

Transformational leadership builds upon transactional leadership (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Transformational leadership can be considered as a process where leaders and followers influence each other to enhance morale and motivation. According to Burns (1978), transformational leadership is more effective than transactional leadership, where the appeal is to more self-centered concerns. He also views transformational leadership as a continuing process rather than the discrete exchanges of the transactional approach. Bass & Avolio (1994) proposed that transformational leadership contains four types of characteristics, also known as the four I’s, including Charisma/Idealized Influence, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation and Individualized Consideration.

Albritton (1998) applied a Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire to test the transactional and transformational models in academic libraries and found that transformational leadership was perceived as having more effect on leadership outcomes and dimensions of organization effectiveness than did transactional leadership. Bass and Avolio (1989) supported the distinction between transformational and transactional leadership. They also pointed out that although laissez-faire leadership is revealed infrequently in the US businesses, leaders still exhibit it in
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varying amounts (as cited in Bass, 1990). Previous studies have also found that laissez-faire leadership has an adverse impact on work-related performance of subordinates (Bass, 1990).

According to Engen, Leeden and Willemsen (2001), since the transformational leadership style emphasizes the leader’s intellectual stimulation and the individual consideration given to employees, this style can be depicted as a feminine leadership style. As mentioned above, some studies discovered female leaders displaying more transformational behaviors and fewer transactional styles than male leaders. In addition, transactional and transformational leadership have also been examined in various cultures. For example, Yokochi (1989) reported that the top leaders in several large Japanese firms rated by followers as more transformational also had higher ratings on their followers’ level of effectiveness.

Furthermore, according to Earley and Gibson (1998), a number of cross-cultural studies have shown that collectivists tend to have a stronger attachment to their organizations and tend to subordinate their individual goals to group goals. Indeed, many leaders in collectivist cultures highlight the importance of maintaining long-term relationships as well as in-group solidarity (Elenkov, 1998). The aforementioned central values of collectivist cultures are some of the main orientations associated with transformational leadership. That is, a transformational leader is anticipated to build followers’ identification with a collective vision, as well as to enhance motivation and performance among followers (Jung et al., 1995).

By contrast, in order to satisfy their own self-interests, people with high individualism place higher priority on individual achievement, as well as on personal rewards based on satisfying transactional agreements. The person or self is defined as an independent entity. These characteristics match the transactional leadership model since they are typically more focused on short-term results. Given the previous rationale and literature review, we proposed two more
hypotheses:

H2: Anticipated female leadership styles significantly differ between Taiwan and the US as represented by Rotary Club members.

H3: Cultural values and anticipated female leadership styles in Taiwan and the US are significantly correlated with each other.

Method

As we mentioned previously, the present study was conducted in Rotary Clubs. Briefly, Rotary is an international organization of business and professional leaders who provide humanitarian service, encourage high ethical standards in all vocations, and help build good will and peace in the world. More than 160 countries worldwide have Rotary Clubs. Approximately 1.2 million Rotarians belong to more than 30,000 Rotary Clubs (Rotary, 2007).

However, constrained by the shortage of time, resources, and funds, only two independent samples are selected, for this study, from the population of Rotary District 3510 in Taiwan and Rotary District 6600 in the United States. We used the mail survey method to collect data so as to explore the causal relationship between the cultural values of the Rotary Club members and their general anticipation of female leadership styles in Taiwan and the US. According to Singleton and Straits (2005), the survey method is an appropriate way to generalize an accurate picture of behaviors or ideas, and mail questionnaires have been found to be one of the most frequently used methods to conduct an accurate survey. The survey instrument in this study was developed by using some existing, field-tested leadership measures including Bass and Avolio’s (1997) Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire Form 6S (MLQ6S), and Hofstede’s (1994) Value Survey Module (VSM94). However, since VSM94 was initially designed for American culture, and this study was conducted in both Taiwan and the United States, some scale items
were changed to include culturally specific items.

The questionnaire contains three parts. Part A comprises 20 declarative statements to measure four cultural dimensions (Collectivism, Masculinity, Customs, and Life-Long Relationships). On all subscales, a high score indicates a high degree of the characteristic concerned. For instance, a high score on the collectivism dimension displays a high degree of collectivism. An example of the statements on collectivism is “Harmony and consensus in our club are ultimate goals.” Part B assesses Rotarians’ anticipated female leadership style. The 21 items in Part B are adapted from the MLQ6S, including transformational leadership style, transactional leadership styles, and laissez-faire style. A sample item of idealized influence in transformational leadership style looks like “I anticipate female leaders to let members feel good to be around them.” Part C asks for the demographic information of the participants.

For cross-cultural research, it is imperative to create equivalent bases upon which such comparisons could be made, and the equivalence can only be assured through the use of rigorous procedures, such as back-translation (Lonner, 1979). Thus, the questionnaire were designed in English and translated into Chinese. A Chinese doctoral student backward translated the Chinese version of the questionnaire into English. An American English professor compared the original English questionnaire and the back-translated version to identify the questions that could cause differences between them. The translation was revised to deal with the differences. All participants were invited to complete the questionnaire in their native languages.

A pilot survey was conducted with a sample of 50 in both Taiwan and the US to identify potential problems with the interpretation of terms and concepts. To ensure the internal consistency of the scales that measure members’ cultural values and their anticipated female leadership styles, reliability tests based on Cronbach’s Coefficient Alpha were conducted. The
reliability result scores were from .932 to .587. Although the scales reached the acceptable
standard (Reinard, 2001), we still fixed the wording of some items in Part A based on some
comments of two quantitative professors.

**Formal Study**

The two independent samples for this study are Rotary Club members drawn from the
population of Rotary District 3510 in Taiwan and Rotary District 6600 in the United States since
the senior researcher has been a Rotary member in both districts. The samples for this study were
selected based on the criteria of functional equivalence and representativeness. The samples are
functionally equivalent since all of the participants are Rotary Club members in both locations.
Since Rotary is an international organization, all of its members around the world share
similar missions and goals, provide similar objectives of services, and observe the same criteria.
In addition, the two districts are similar in size with 71 clubs in District 3510 and 67 clubs in
District 6600. To be representative of the targeted Rotary Club members, the samples were
randomly chosen.

*Instrumentation.* Similar to the pilot study, the questionnaire contains three parts which
ask for responses on the four cultural dimensions (Part A), anticipated female leadership styles
(Part B), and demographic information (Part C). The items in the first two parts ask the
respondents to indicate how much they disagree or agree with each of the statements on a 5-point
Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree).

*Procedure and participants.* Although the senior author has had been an active Rotarian
for both districts, we still had to conduct the surveys for each sample at different times because
we needed time to get the members’ list of both Rotary districts and the governors’ endorsement
from each district. By so doing, we actually increased the response rate. In total, 550
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questionnaires were sent out to Rotary Club members in District 3510, Taiwan from June 15 to July 15, 2007, and 550 questionnaires were sent out to Rotary Club members in District 6600, the United States from September 15 to October 15, 2007. The survey instruments were distributed by mailing to the randomly chosen subjects with an enclosed pre-addressed and postage-paid return envelope, district governors’ endorsement, and a consent letter explaining the purpose of the study. The consent letter stated plainly that their response would be treated as confidential, and there were no right or wrong answers to the questions. Also, it is stated clearly in the questionnaire instruction that participation was completely voluntary. Respondents were asked to return the completed surveys via the enclosed pre-addressed and postage paid envelope and informed that completion of the surveys equated to granting their consent to partake in the study. The total number of the participants was 307, and the overall response rates of the questionnaires were 27.3% ($n=150$) in Taiwan and 28.5% ($n=157$) in the US. The data show that the number of male respondents is 2.5 times (60.7%) that of female respondents (24%) in Taiwan, while the number of male respondents (84.1%) is five times that of female respondents (16.7%) in the US. The overall distribution of formal educational attainment is slightly skewed to higher education with the majority of the sample earning a bachelor degree (43.3%) in Taiwan. The majority of the US samples even have master’s or Ph.D. degrees (45.9%). This means that, overall, both samples are well-educated in the two districts, and most of the respondents are married (76.7% in Taiwan and 86.5% in the US).

In Taiwan, most respondents are between 51-65 years of age (43.3%) with a mean of 55 years of age, while in the US, most respondents are similarly between 51-65 years of age (41.7%) with a mean of 57 years of age. As for the years of membership, most respondents have 11 to 20 years of membership (35.4%) in Taiwan, but most respondents have just four to ten
years of membership (37.8%) in the US. While nearly half of the samples are past presidents (46.7%), more than half of the respondents are regular members (52.9%) in the US. In terms of their work positions, most respondents are in managerial positions in both countries with the US slightly higher in proportion of respondents holding managerial positions (48% in Taiwan and 66.9% in the US). Finally, most Taiwanese respondents believe in Buddhism (58.7%) whereas most US respondents’ religious beliefs are either Christianity or Catholicism (93%).

**Validity and Reliability.** Similar to the pilot study, the formal questionnaire had four parts, which measure the participants’ cultural values and anticipated leadership styles. Hofstede’s (1994) cultural dimensions were modified as the theoretical basis for the questions. As previously stated, the wording of some items in Part A were fixed based on the results of the pilot study and two experts’ comments. However, after running the Cronbach’s Coefficient Alpha tests for the formal questionnaire, we still encountered low reliability scores for some items. To achieve acceptable reliability scores, we canceled three items in Part A. As for the leadership items in Part B, all the three leadership clusters performed adequately, ranging from $\alpha = .917$ to $\alpha = .681$ in the present study. Just as Clark and Watson (1995) indicated, reliabilities in the .6 to .7 range have been characterized as good or adequate. The factors of customs and life-long relationships fell below the recommended value but were included in the analyses because they approximated the cut-off scores. Nevertheless, the low reliability coefficients were viewed as a limitation to the study. The internal consistency coefficients of the items in the questionnaire are presented in Table 1 (see Appendix A).

**Results**

In our analysis, demographic variables such as gender, age, marital status, length of membership, education, religious beliefs, and business position have been statistically controlled
in order to rule out their influence on the results. Frequencies were run for all cultural
dimensions, leadership styles, demographic information, and control variables to examine data
distribution and data entry errors. Statistical significance tests were also run to compare the
differences between Taiwan and the US. To answer the research question, three hypotheses were
formulated.

**H1: Country Differences on Cultural Value Dimensions**

Hypothesis 1 proposed that cultural value dimensions significantly differ between Taiwan
and the US as represented by Rotary Club members. The independent sample \( t \)-test was applied to
test the differences in dimension scores, the results of which are shown in Table 2 (see Appendix
B).

Based on a sample of 307 Rotarians and a 95% confidence level, we can conclude that
the research findings verify the assumption that there is a significant difference in the Rotary
Club members’ cultural values between Taiwan and the US (collectivism: \( t = 2.629, df = 305, p =
.009 \); masculinity: \( t = 5.295, df = 305, p = .001 \); customs: \( t = 13.321, df = 305, p = .001 \); and
life-long relationships: \( t = 9.688, df = 305, p = .001 \)). Rotary Club members in Taiwan
demonstrated higher means in all four cultural dimensions than those in the US: collectivism
(Taiwan mean = 3.85; US mean = 3.68), masculinity (Taiwan mean = 2.73; US mean = 2.34),
customs (Taiwan mean = 3.92; US mean = 3.21), and life-long relationships (Taiwan mean =
3.97; US mean = 3.42). Hence the assumption of this study that the two countries exhibit
different cultural dimensions is validated.

**H2: Country Difference on Anticipated Female Leadership Styles**

Hypothesis 2 proposed that anticipated female leadership styles significantly differ
between Taiwan and the US as represented by Rotary Club members. The results of the
independent sample $t$-test test revealed that there is a significant difference in the anticipations of female leaders demonstrating transformational ($t = -2.287$, $df = 305$, $p = .023$) and laissez-faire ($t = 12.616$, $df = 305$, $p = .001$) leadership styles in Taiwan and the US, but there is no significant difference in the anticipation of female leaders displaying transactional leadership style ($t = .917$, $df = 305$, $p = .360$) in Taiwan and the US (as shown in Table 3).

In addition, after comparing their means, the data show that Rotary Club members in the US have a higher anticipation that female leaders will demonstrate transformational leadership styles than their Taiwanese counterparts (Taiwan mean = 3.63 and US mean = 3.76). Rotary Club members in Taiwan have a slightly higher anticipation that female leaders will demonstrate transactional leadership styles (Taiwan mean = 3.54 and US mean = 3.49) and much higher anticipation of laissez-faire style (Taiwan mean = 2.94 and US mean = 2.05) than their American counterparts.

**H3: The Correlated Relationship between Cultural Values and Anticipated Female Leadership Styles**

Hypothesis 3 proposed that cultural values and anticipated female leadership styles in Taiwan and the US are significantly correlated with each other. In order to compare the country differences between cultural values and anticipated female leadership styles and determine how different variables affect each other, a series of regression analyses were run via Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). To find the best equations in predicting each anticipated leadership style, we examined three models as shown in Tables 4 to Table 6 (see Appendix D, E, and F).

Before looking at the exact results concerning the anticipated leadership styles, it is necessary to point out that Model 1 included the focus independent variables: four cultural
dimensions and the variable *country*. In Model 2, all control variables such as gender, age, marital status, length of membership, education, religious beliefs, club’s position, and business position were added. In Model 3, four cross products were created in order to examine the interactions between country and each cultural dimension. Following are the research findings of the anticipated leadership styles:

**Transformational leadership.** In this regression analysis as seen in Table 4, the variable of *life-long relationships* is the best predictor of transformational leadership style anticipation among the variables in the study (beta = .385, *p* < .001). In other words, people who treasure life-long relationships are likely to anticipate their female leaders to display transformational leadership style. In addition, the cultural variables of *collectivism* (beta = .184, *p* < .01) and *Taiwan* (beta = -.311, *p* < .05) also have significant effects on the variable of anticipating female leaders to display transformational leadership style.

**Transactional leadership.** Based on the data analysis in Table 5, the variable *customs* in this regression analysis is the best predictor of transactional leadership style anticipation among the variables in this regression analysis (beta = .272, *p* < .001). In addition, the variables of *Christianity* (beta = .238), *life-long relationships* (beta = .186), and *masculinity* (beta = -.128) also have significant impact on anticipation of female leaders using transactional leadership style. The predictive power of cultural dimensions and cross products for the transaction leadership style anticipation is low.

**Laissez-faire leadership.** In this regression analysis in Table 6, the interaction variable of *Taiwan x life-long relationships* is the strongest predictor variable among all variables. Its high standardized coefficient has statistically significant effect on the response variable: anticipation of female leaders using laissez-faire leadership style (beta = -.889 *p* < .001). In addition, the
variable *managerial* also has negative significant effects on the variable of anticipating female leaders to demonstrate laissez-faire leadership style (beta = -0.113).

In conclusion, comparing the results, the cultural dimensions discussed above and the country variables best predict the respondents’ anticipations of laissez-faire and transformational leadership styles, but they are much weaker in predicting the respondents’ transactional leadership style in anticipations.

**Discussion**

With regard to the findings of the first hypothesis, we found that Rotary Club members in Taiwan have higher scores in the cultural dimensions of collectivism, masculinity, customs, and life-long relationships than their counterparts in the US. Moreover, the Rotary Club members in Taiwan reveal the highest score in life-long relationships and the lowest score in masculinity, while those in the US have the highest score in collectivism and lowest score in masculinity. Nonetheless, Taiwan’s score in masculinity is still much higher than that of the US. The results are contradictory to Hofstede’s study (2001b) that the American culture is characterized by high masculinity and low collectivism.

Before addressing the research findings different from those of Hofstede’s study, we find it necessary to use cultural dimensions to explain the different mentality of the respondents from Taiwan and the US. For instance, there are two major differences between the American and Taiwanese respondents regarding life-long relationships and customs. Taiwanese respondents have much longer tenure and are more likely to reveal former leadership positions in Rotary Clubs, which can be explained by the dimensions of life-long relationships and value priorities. As explained above, the Chinese tend to form rich, life-long networks of mutual relations. Since personal relationships often take a long time to develop, the Chinese tend to stay solid once the
relationships have been established. In contrast, Americans generally do not build long-term relationships outside of their families. Chinese relationships last for a long time even after the groups dissolve, or there are no more work-related relationships. This is less likely the case for Americans. As for revealing former leadership positions, the Chinese attach importance to “face need” just as a tree needs bark to cover it. Therefore, the Taiwanese respondents are more likely to feel honored and respected with the title of a past president whereas American respondents feel that taking a turn to be the president of a Rotary Club is a duty for each member. When the duty is fulfilled, they behave like the other ordinary members again.

As for the research findings different from those of Hofstede’s (2001a) study in collectivism and masculinity, we argue that, based on previous scholarships (Ardichili & Kuchinke, 2002; Kuchinke, 1999), Hofstede’s cultural dimensions might not be stable over time. In addition, when specific samples are collected, they do not necessarily correspond with Hofstede’s cultural-dimension scores. For instance, Gudykunst et al. (1992) did a cross-cultural study and found that when college students were sampled in Japan and the US, the Japanese students appeared more individualistic than their American counterparts. Gudykunst and Nishida (1986) also explained that both collectivism and individualism existed in all cultures, but one pattern was likely to predominate. Moreover, one of the comments in our survey provides further proof, “Leaders in Rotary Clubs have to be careful so as not to be too aggressive and demanding because every project in the club is voluntary teamwork.” Therefore, it is less likely for a leader to show high masculinity and individualism in Rotary Clubs due to the nature of the voluntary, teamwork-based projects.

Concerning leadership styles, there is significant difference between the Taiwanese and American Rotary Club members’ anticipations of female leaders to display transformational and
laissez-faire. To be specific, Rotary Club members in both locations reveal the highest scores in their anticipations of female leaders to display transformational leadership and the lowest scores in the anticipations of female leaders to demonstrate the laissez-faire style. The US Rotary Club members, however, are somewhat more expectant of female leaders to display the transformational leadership style than those in Taiwan. With a statistically significant difference, the Taiwanese Rotary Club members have a much higher anticipation of laissez-faire style than their American counterparts. Specifically, among the four features of transformational leadership, the data of this study reveal that American respondents have the highest anticipation of female leaders to demonstrate Intellectual Stimulation followed by Idealized Influence, Inspirational Motivation, and Individualized Consideration. Taiwanese respondents, in contrast, put the highest anticipation on female leaders to perform Individualized Consideration, followed by Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation, and Idealized Influence. The reasons are that most American respondents anticipated female leaders to focus more on creativity and leading by example whereas Taiwanese female leaders were highly anticipated to take good care of each member and assign tasks on an individual basis.

The results of the third hypothesis reveal that there is a significant relationship between cultural dimensions and Rotary Club members’ anticipated female leadership styles in both places. Based on the adjusted $R^2$’s of the three multiple regression analyses, the data show that the laissez-faire leadership style can be best explained by the factors of the cultural dimensions and countries, followed by transformational leadership style. Transactional leadership style, however, can be explained little by the factors of the cultural values and countries. Why little? The reason lies in that Rotary Club members are mostly from top positions of various organizations and are motivated by voluntarism or willingness rather than exchanging rewards for services rendered.
Thus, they do anticipate female leaders to demonstrate transformational leadership style rather than transactional leadership style.

Meanwhile, the Rotary Club members’ lowest scores in anticipating female leaders to demonstrate the laissez-faire style in both countries can be explained by the voluntary and teamwork features of the Rotary Club. As shown in the study, Rotary Club members have high collectivist values and tend to collaborate with their leaders and other members, so they are unlikely to fulfill projects based on the self-directed ways in a laissez-faire style. As for the results that the Taiwanese Rotary Club members have higher masculinity and much higher anticipations of female leaders to demonstrate laissez-faire leadership than their American counterparts, we argue that organizations in highly masculine cultures often have goals that agree with the achieving role of the male, and as such, are almost always led by males with a setting established by men (Hofstede, 1980a). This trend leads to prejudice against female leaders and supports the general way of male dominance in most societies that men have a higher status than females. Consequently, men are not anticipated to be led by females. According to the traditional Chinese cultural norms, the elderly males should be treated as natural rulers, and people at the lower rank, including females, should demonstrate obedience and submission (MacCormack, 1991). Therefore, for the Rotary Clubs in Taiwan, the more masculinity the members reveal, the more laissez-faire leadership they anticipate their female leaders to demonstrate because it is against the cultural norms for masculine members to be led by females. However, we are also aware that in cross-cultural studies, it is often difficult to attribute observed mean differences between country scores to national cultural differences, because these differences may be products of methodological problems, such as lack of equivalence of meaning for measure and response bias (Yukl, 2010).
In this study, although the significant differences between Taiwan and the US seem to support that the major variables of cultural dimensions can explain the anticipated female leadership styles, they are not sufficient to fully explain the anticipated female leadership styles. Only 38% of the variance can be explained by these cultural factors in the anticipated laissez-faire leadership style, 19% of the variance in the anticipated transformational leadership style, and only 12% of the variance in the anticipated transactional leadership style. The results could suggest two possibilities. First, the four cultural dimensions used in this study may not cover the whole national-level cultural dimensions relevant to leadership. For instance, according to Ralston et al. (1999), individualism and collectivism are unique constructs and should be split into individual continua. Second, some other factors such as language, political system, organizational culture, and past experience working under female leaders might have stronger impacts on female leadership than national culture. These factors, however, are beyond the scope of this study.

**Conclusion**

Through the theoretical lenses of Bass and Avolio’s leadership notions and Hofstede’s modified cultural dimensions, this survey-based study examined and compared cultural values and anticipated female leadership styles of 307 members in 138 Rotary Clubs between Taiwan and the US, which differ very dramatically in terms of their cultural, social, political, and economic histories. The research findings are twofold. First, in terms of cultural dimensions, Rotary Club members in Taiwan demonstrated higher scores in all of the cultural dimensions of collectivism, masculinity, customs, and life-long relationships than their American counterparts. Second, with regard to leadership styles, Rotary Club members in both Taiwan and the US anticipated female leaders to display transformational leadership. The significance of this study
lies in that, besides confirming some previous research findings concerning the correlations between cultural values and female leadership, we have modified Hofstede’s cultural dimensions so as to adjust certain dimension bias in cross-cultural studies, and we have also found that national culture alone could not account for the anticipated female leadership styles.

It is hoped that the results of the study will not only build an understanding of the cultural values of Rotary Clubs and the Rotary Club members’ anticipated styles of female leadership, but also contribute to the body of knowledge related to the research on non-profit organizations and cross-cultural comparison of leadership styles. We further hope that as a result of some heightened awareness, due to this study, the Rotary Clubs and other non-profit organizations may move toward more equality between men and women, especially with regard to leadership in senior or executive positions.

With the rapid changes and uncertainty in the new century, new types of leaders with new styles and skills are demanded (Adler, 1997, 1999; Bennis, 1996, 1997, 1998; House, 1995; Kanter, 2000). This study shows that people anticipate female leaders who bring different perspectives to the table as leaders. Their transformational leadership style can foster innovation and development in organizations. As Adler (1999) claimed, feminine characteristics or styles are more suitable for both transformational leadership and the twenty-first century leadership perspectives. She predicted that the 21st century is a century for women to bring their talents into full play. In the knowledge-based economic system, the demand for physical labor in the past has turned to the emphasis on brainpower. Since the new century is in urgent need of female leaders, the unique feminine qualities have become the leadership styles that are greatly advocated in the new era. Therefore, we believe that the topic of female leadership will continue to be emphasized. The development of women’s positions and roles will gradually proceed toward an optimistic
and positive direction, even though advancing to the top positions for female leaders is like passing “through a labyrinth that requires persistence, awareness of one’s progress, and a careful analysis of the puzzles that lie ahead” (Eagly & Carli, 2007, p. x).

**Limitations**

Apart from the strengths in this study, there are some limitations that readers are cautioned in interpreting the findings and conclusions in this study. First, although there are quite a number of research studies on cultural values and leadership styles, there are few studies on the topic of female leadership in international non-profit organizations. Therefore, lacking existing categories, this study can only analyze data based on general inferences or constructions about cultural values and female leadership in non-profit organizations. Second, some survey items in this study have shown minor problems. For instance, we have encountered low reliability scores for several items in the survey questionnaire; we, therefore, had to delete these items from the questionnaire and used only three items in the survey to measure each cultural dimension. Finally, due to the lack of financial support and pressed for time, this study is mainly based on probability samples from the two accessible Rotary Districts, 3510 in Taiwan and 6600 in the US. After conveniently choosing the two Rotary Districts, we have randomly chosen a probability sample of 550 subjects from each district according to their respective membership list.

**Suggestions for the Future Research**

As previously mentioned, in the survey of this study, the reliability scores of some items are low in both Taiwanese and American cultural groups, especially in Part A’s life-long relationships dimension. Technically, this dimension is somewhat related to Confucianism, a complicated philosophical system and cultural value. Hence, the items used to measure this cultural dimension in this study are somewhat insufficient. Thus, we suggest adding more
In addition, although the laissez-faire leadership style is less prevalent in the two countries than the other two styles, the Taiwanese Rotary Club members have shown much higher anticipations of female leaders to demonstrate laissez-faire leadership than their American counterparts. This suggests that the laissez-faire leadership style is worth more attention for future research.

Moreover, this research is actually inquiring whether leadership style is a culturally universal or culturally specific concept. Researchers like Hofstede (1984, 1994, 2001b) proposed a culture-specific approach, which assumes that leadership concepts and styles should be different among cultures. On the other hand, researchers like Bass (1997) contended that leadership is cultural-free and transcends cultural boundaries. From the findings of this study, we suggest a combination of both approaches. That is, national culture is not the only factor to account for the anticipated female leadership styles as shown in the research results of this study. Finally, the study of leadership concepts and styles should include more variables such as organizational culture, political system, language, and feminine or masculine characteristics to provide more sufficient explanations for female leadership styles in non-profit organizations.
References


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**Appendix A**

**Table 1**

_Reliability for Sub-Scales Variables_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>α Scores</th>
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<tr>
<td>Collectivism/Individualism</td>
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<td>Masculinity/Femininity</td>
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<td>Customs and Value Priorities</td>
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<td>Life-Long/Work-Related Relationships</td>
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<td><strong>Part B: Leadership Styles</strong></td>
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<td>Transactional Leadership</td>
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<tr>
<td>Laissez-Faire Leadership</td>
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**Appendix B**

**Table 2**

_T-Test Results of Cultural Values_

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Taiwan (n = 150)</th>
<th>US (n = 157)</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p</th>
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<td>9.688</td>
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**Appendix C**

**Table 3**

_T-Test Results of Leadership Styles_

<table>
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<th>Variable</th>
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<th>US (n = 157)</th>
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<th>df</th>
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<td>12.616</td>
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### Appendix D

**Table 4**  
*Regression Models for the Relationship between Cultural Dimensions and Anticipations of Female Leaders to Use Transformational Leadership Style in Taiwan and the US*

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<th>Regressor</th>
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<td>(R^2)</td>
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<td>0.288</td>
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<td>0.233</td>
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Note: *\(p<.05\); **\(p<.01\); ***\(p<.001\)
### Table 5
Regression Models for the Relationship between Cultural Dimensions and Anticipations of Female Leaders to Use Transactional Leadership Style in Taiwan and the US

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regressor</th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th>Model 3</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$B$</td>
<td>Beta</td>
<td>$B$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
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<td>0.000</td>
<td>1.729***</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0.103</td>
<td>0.088</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masculinity</td>
<td>-0.099*</td>
<td>-0.139*</td>
<td>-0.089*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customs</td>
<td>0.240***</td>
<td>0.291***</td>
<td>0.221***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life-long Relationships</td>
<td>0.151**</td>
<td>0.177**</td>
<td>0.156**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>-0.185**</td>
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<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.011</td>
<td>0.000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
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<td>0.114</td>
<td>0.145</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Less than a college degree is the reference group)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor</td>
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<td>MAPHD</td>
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<td>President</td>
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<tr>
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<td>INTERACTION TERMS</td>
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<td>Taiwan*Collectivism</td>
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<td>Taiwan*Masculinity</td>
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<td>Taiwan*Customs</td>
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<td>Taiwan*Long-Term Relationship</td>
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<td>adjusted $R^2$</td>
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Note: *$p < .05$; **$p < .01$; ***$p < .001$
### Table 6
Regression Models for the Relationship between Cultural Dimensions and Anticipations of Female Leaders to Use Laissez-Faire Leadership Style in Taiwan and the US

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regressor</th>
<th>Model 1</th>
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<th>Model 3</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Beta</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Beta</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Beta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0.000</td>
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<td>0.068</td>
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<td>-0.011</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0.122*</td>
<td>0.107*</td>
<td>0.062</td>
<td>0.054</td>
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<tr>
<td>Customs</td>
<td>0.169*</td>
<td>0.129*</td>
<td>0.120</td>
<td>0.090</td>
<td>0.042</td>
<td>0.032</td>
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<td>-0.047</td>
<td>-0.069</td>
<td>-0.050</td>
<td>0.052</td>
<td>0.038</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0.483***</td>
<td>0.717***</td>
<td>0.463***</td>
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<td>-0.241</td>
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Note: *p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001