Chapter 4

Wear the Style That Suits You:
How Leader's Sex and Behavior Determine Perceived Effectiveness
Abstract

The present set of studies aims to illuminate how gender stereotypes about leadership are related to stereotypes about the effectiveness of leadership. With a set of three studies, we show that stereotypes may not be as negative for female leaders as the commonly cited ‘think-manager-think-male’ phenomenon suggests (Schein, 1973; 1975). First, we show there is an equal number of leadership styles that are believed to be more masculine than feminine as there are styles that are believed to be more feminine than masculine. Our findings show that more communal leadership styles are believed to be more feminine, while more agentic leadership styles are believed to be more masculine. Secondly, we demonstrate that styles both high in communion and agency are perceived to be more effective, while styles low in both agency and communion are perceived to be ineffective. Finally, we show that there is a difference in styles that are perceived to be effective for male and female leaders. It is concluded that both male and female leaders may benefit from showing gender congruent styles.
Imagine to be asked to picture a manager. It is likely that you will think of your own manager, who is most probably male. Although the number of female managers has been slowly increasing in the past years, the top positions are still occupied by men (e.g. in academics: Ellemers, Van den Heuvel, De Gilder, Maass, & Bonvini, 2004). This will shape the beliefs you have about leadership. The most commonly cited belief is the "think manager think male" phenomenon (Brenner, Tomkiewicz, & Schein, 1989; Cann & Siegfried, 1990; Dodge, Gilroy, & Fenzel, 1995; Duehr & Bono, 2006; Powell, Butterfield, & Parent, 2002; Schein, 1973, 1975; Schein, Mueller, Lituchy, & Liu, 1996; Sczesny, Bosak, Neff, & Schyns, 2004). This globally present phenomenon (Schein, 2001) entails that when both men and women are presented with the word manager, they associate this with masculine characteristics rather than with feminine characteristics.

Role theory states that people hold certain beliefs about expected behaviors according to the role/position that they or other people are in (Biddle, 1986). According to this perspective, men and women in leadership positions actually occupy two roles at the same time: a gender role and a leadership role. Both roles are related to different expected behaviors. The roles associated with gender are very different for men and women. It is often argued that the male gender role, compared to the female gender role, is closer to the beliefs people have about leadership, as is shown by the think-manager-think-male phenomenon (Eagly, 1987). However, we believe that most of these studies focused on leadership styles that have power, dominance, or agency as central constructs in their definition of a leader, leaving out other leadership behaviors that have been shown to be effective (Judge & Piccolo, 2004; Lowe, Kroecck, & Sivasubramaniam, 1996).

Therefore, we argue that when looking at a broader range of leadership behaviors and styles, the situation may be more nuanced than the think-manager-think-male phenomenon. We believe that there are as many styles ascribed to female leaders as to male leaders. Providing a fine-grained picture of the gender beliefs in leadership may enable male and female leaders to better understand the stereotypes they are facing. As a result, they may be better able to adjust to the beliefs by choosing those leadership styles that fit them best. Preliminary evidence for the existence of separate masculine and feminine leadership styles is provided by the study by Cann and Siegfried (1990). They showed that consideration behaviors are perceived to be more feminine than masculine and structuring behaviors are
perceived to be more masculine than feminine. In a similar vein, Johnson, Murphy, Zewdie, and Reichard (2008) demonstrated that the male leadership prototype is more closely related to perceptions of agency, while the female leadership prototype is more closely related to perceptions of communion. Vinkenburg, Van Engen, Eagly, and Johannesen-Schmidt (2011) and Embry, Padgett, and Caldwell (2008) showed that female leaders are expected to hold more transformational leadership styles, while men are expected to use the transactional styles. The above studies have shown that some leadership styles are more prototypical of men and some are more prototypical of women but have not sufficiently addressed the question which of these leadership styles are more effective for women and which are more effective for men. If some leadership behaviors can be ascribed to men and others to women, the question then becomes which leadership styles are believed to be more effective for men and women. This is the question we have set out to answer in our research.

Based on meta-analyses showing that transformational leadership is positively related to leadership effectiveness (Judge & Piccolo, 2004; Lowe, Kroeck, & Sivasubramaniam, 1996), Vinkenburg et al. (2011) concluded that female leaders are expected to use the more effective styles and male leaders are expected to use the more ineffective styles. Thus, these findings might imply that we should start to incorporate the “think effective manager, think female” belief. We argue, however, that one should not jump to this conclusion and that the actual relation between leadership styles and effectiveness provides little information about the stereotypical beliefs about leadership effectiveness. That is, what might be effective in actual organizational settings might not be stereotypically believed to be effective. More specifically, we propose that people will have strong beliefs regarding what is effective leadership as well as what is effective leadership for women and men. Therefore, the present study will examine the beliefs about the relationship between leadership styles and leadership effectiveness.

If Vinkenburg et al. (2011) are indeed correct in their deduction that people’s beliefs about effectiveness accurately reflect actual leadership effectiveness and, as a result, accurately perceive feminine styles to be more effective, then why do we see so few women at the top positions of organizations? One of the possible reasons might be that the type of behaviors male and female leaders use evoke different reactions. That is, even if a person shows
leadership behaviors that might be objectively effective, this does not necessarily mean that this behavior is indeed perceived to be effective. In this respect, it has been shown that women’s leadership behaviors are reacted to more negatively than men’s leadership behaviors (Butler & Geis, 1990; Ridgeway, 1982). Even in real interactions, with no objective differences in performance, people rate men to have performed more competently than women (Carli, 1990; Carli, 1999; Wood & Karten, 1986). Self-promoting men evoke more favorable reactions than men acting in a modest way. Women face the opposite judgment (Giacalone & Riordan, 1990; Rudman, 1998; Wosinska, Dabul, Whetstone-Dion, & Cialdini, 1996). However, women tend to receive more favorable evaluations when they use more stereotypically feminine behaviors, such as warmth or agreeableness, or when women lead in a democratic manner compared to women who show less feminine behaviors (Carli, 1990, 1995; Eagly, Makhijani, & Klonsky, 1992). These findings all suggest that there are clear beliefs about how male and female leaders should act and that these beliefs have a profound influence on their perceived effectiveness. The present set of studies aims to illuminate how gender stereotypes about leadership are related to stereotypes about effective leadership.

In order to test our hypotheses, we will use a two dimensional model of leadership, the leadership circumplex. This model is based on the notion that almost all definitions of leadership refer to leadership as the process of influencing others, or the interpersonal interaction between leader and led (Vroom & Jago, 2007; Yukl, 2010). Interpersonal interactions are best summarized by the interpersonal circumplex. Therefore, Redeker, De Vries, Roukhout, Vermeren, and De Fruyt (2010; Chapter 2) have developed a leadership circumplex, in which specific leadership behaviors are described. In a circumplex, variables - in this case leadership behaviors - are located on the circumference of a circular model spanned by two orthogonal dimensions highly similar to the interpersonal dimensions agency and communion (Freedman, Leary, Ossorio, & Coffey, 1951; Kiesler, 1983; Leary, 1957; Trapnell & Wiggins, 1990; Wiggins, 2003). This makes it a model with a continuous ordering of leadership behaviors. Each behavior is related to the dimensions agency -defined as the condition of being a differentiated individual, which is manifested in strivings for mastery and power-, and/or communion -defined as the condition of being part of a larger social or spiritual entity, which is manifested in strivings for intimacy, union, and solidarity.
within that larger entity- (Wiggins, 2003). The circumplex is divided into octants. These octants represent eight different leadership styles (coaching, inspirational, directive, authoritarian, distrustful, withdrawn, yielding, and participative leadership) that can be differentiated based on their degree of agency and communion (see Figure 1 for a visualization of the CLS and the eight different leadership styles, see Table 1 for definitions of the eight different leadership styles). We opted for this comprehensive description of different leadership behaviors in order to obtain a complete picture of the beliefs about the femininity and masculinity of leadership behaviors, beliefs about effective leadership behaviors, and finally beliefs about what is effective leadership behavior for men and for women. Previous work has focused only on subsets of leadership behaviors (e.g., Embry et al., 2008; Vinkenburg et al., 2011), which limits the generalizability of those results. Additionally, the leadership circumplex fits well with the stereotype content model of Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, and Xu (2002), who demonstrated that two basic dimensions form the basis of each stereotype, namely competence and warmth. These dimensions appear to be – at face value – highly similar to the two main dimensions of the leadership circumplex, agency and communion, which we described above.

The present study will first examine which leadership styles are expected to be more masculine or more feminine. Previous work has shown that the stereotypical beliefs that people have regarding men and women overlap with certain leadership styles. More specifically, people believe that men are more agentic, that is, more dominant, competitive, assertive, etc., whereas women are believed to be more communal, i.e. more sensitive to the needs of others, gentle, compassionate, etc. (Abele, 2003; Bem, 1974; Broverman, Vogel, Broverman, Clarkson, & Rosenkrantz, 1972; Schmid Mast, 2004). We therefore expect to replicate and extend the findings of Cann and Siegfried (1990) and Vinkenburg et al. (2011) and hypothesize that leadership styles high in agentic behaviors (i.e., inspirational and directive leadership) and low in communal behaviors (i.e., authoritarian and distrustful leadership) are expected to be more masculine than feminine. Furthermore, we expect that styles low in agency (i.e., withdrawn and yielding leadership) and high in communion (i.e., participative and coaching leadership) are believed to be more feminine than masculine (Hypothesis 1).
Figure 1. The leadership circumplex
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Octant</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Example items (number of items)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coaching</td>
<td>Persons with a coaching leadership style tend to show their appreciation for their subordinates and let them know how important they are, they tend to stimulate their subordinates through positive communication and to listen to the opinion of their subordinates.</td>
<td>&quot;shows that staff members are important to him/her&quot;, &quot;gives support to staff members&quot;, &quot;asks for the staff's opinion&quot; ($k = 15$)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspirational</td>
<td>Persons with an inspirational leadership style tend to stimulate and persuade subordinates through a clear vision, tend to act decisively when performance and/or organizational problems arise, and to motivate subordinates to perform optimally.</td>
<td>&quot;indicates clearly his/her role in the personal development of staff members&quot;, &quot;acts firmly in situations of crisis&quot;, &quot;sets clear objectives for the staff&quot; ($k = 15$)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directive</td>
<td>Persons with a directive leadership style tend to try to reach success competitively, tend to actively monitor and correct subordinates, and to behave strictly towards subordinates.</td>
<td>&quot;supervises the work of the staff members carefully&quot;, &quot;has severe judgments about staff members&quot;, &quot;is competitive&quot; ($k = 12$)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authoritarian</td>
<td>Persons with an authoritarian leadership style tend to force subordinates to obey them, tend to be harsh on subordinates, and to not accept criticism.</td>
<td>&quot;avoids friendly relationships&quot;, &quot;sets one-sidedly the expected performance level of the staff&quot;, &quot;gives orders in a compulsory way&quot; ($k = 15$)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distrustful</td>
<td>Persons with a distrustful leadership style tend to be suspicious of the motives of subordinates, tend to be quick and negative in their judgment, and stay distant from their subordinates.</td>
<td>&quot;is suspicious&quot;, &quot;judges too quickly&quot;, &quot;does not allow staff members to organize their work themselves&quot; ($k = 15$)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Withdrawn</td>
<td>Persons with a withdrawn leadership style tend to be personally and professionally absent, tend to avoid confrontations and responsibilities, and to act too late when problems arise.</td>
<td>&quot;delays decisions&quot;, &quot;does not take responsibility&quot;, &quot;does not set the expected performance level&quot; ($k = 15$)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yielding</td>
<td>Persons with a yielding leadership style tend to be very flexible when interacting with subordinates and to be hesitant to provide guidance, they tend to put the subordinates’ interest above to the company’s interest, and to avoid being the centre of attention.</td>
<td>&quot;is inconspicuous&quot;, &quot;wants to please everybody&quot;, &quot;is able to subordinate the company’s interests to the staff’s interests&quot; ($k = 15$)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participative</td>
<td>Persons with a participative leadership style tend to include subordinates in all processes, they tend to easily accept and incorporate subordinates’ propositions, and to show their understanding of the feelings and emotions of their subordinates.</td>
<td>&quot;makes certain decisions together with the staff&quot;, &quot;is tolerant&quot;, and &quot;allows staff members to do their work their own way&quot; ($k = 14$)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In Study 2, we will examine the beliefs about leadership effectiveness. Although, to our knowledge, this has not been studied yet, we expect people’s stereotypical beliefs about leadership effectiveness may quite accurately reflect actual effectiveness of the different leadership styles. Previous studies have shown that when people are presented with the words "good manager", they associate this with agentic traits, such as dominance, assertiveness and competitiveness (Powell, Butterfield, & Parent, 2002). However, we propose that people will not only include agentic traits in their effective leader stereotype. In this respect, transformational leadership, consisting of both communal and agentic behaviors, is usually argued to be the most effective leadership style (e.g. Judge & Piccolo, 2004). Therefore, we expect that styles high in both agentic and communal behaviors will be rated as relatively more effective. Accordingly, we expect that styles low in both agency and communion are believed to be relatively less effective (Hypothesis 2).

Finally, we will examine the gender-related effectiveness of the leadership styles. We expect that behaviors will be rated differently on effectiveness when the gender of the leader is taken into account. Combining the two previous hypotheses would lead to the expectation that there are as many styles that are rated as masculine and effective, as there are styles rated as feminine and effective. However, as explained before, previous research has indicated that behaviors are perceived differently when shown by a female or a male leader (e.g., Butler & Geis, 1990; Carli, 1999; Ridgeway, 1982). In general, behaviors shown by male leaders are reacted to more positively and male leaders are perceived as more competent, both compared to female leaders showing the same behaviors (Butler & Geis, 1990; Ridgeway, 1982; Wood & Karen, 1986). A small exception appears to lie in the high communal leadership styles, for instance leading democratically and leading with warm and agreeable styles. The difference in perceived effectiveness tends to be smaller between male and female leader when female leaders use these communal styles (Carli, 1990, 1995; Eagly, Makhijani, & Klonsky, 1992).

Based on these findings, we expect that when the gender of the leader is added to the effectiveness ratings, the differences in believed effectiveness ratings between male and female leaders will become visible, mostly in favor of the male leader. We hypothesize that all leadership styles that will be believed to be more masculine in Study 1, will also be expected to be more effective when shown by male leaders, compared to female leaders.
Moreover, we expect that only the styles that are highly relationship-oriented or communal (i.e., coaching and participative leadership) will be expected to be more effective when used by a female leader, compared to a male leader. However, little can be found in the literature about leadership styles low in agency, withdrawn and yielding leadership. Based on the literature described above, stating that male leaders are perceived as more effective in general, we expect those styles to be perceived as more effective for male leaders, compared to female leaders (Hypothesis 3).

Study 1

Method

Participants

Forty-one persons volunteered to participate in this study. Out of these participants, 18 were men and 23 were women. They ranged in age from 18 to 62 years, with the average age being 30.07 years (SD = 14.06). 34 participants (83%) had a paid job. On average they worked 23.93 hours per week (SD = 13.85). Data was collected as a convenience sample. Participants were approached through the indirect network of the experimenter.

Material and procedure

CLS The Circumplex Leadership Scan is an operationalization of the Leadership Circumplex developed by Redeker, De Vries, Roukhout, Vermeren, and De Fruyt (2012; Chapter 2). Each of the 116 items describes a leadership behavior located on the circumference of the leadership circumplex (a circle spanned by two orthogonal, unrelated dimensions very similar to the interpersonal dimensions agency and communion). Items are located on the circle based on the strength of their relationship. The distance between variables increases when the strength of the association decreases. Items are equally spaced on the circumference, therefore creating a circular continuum of leadership behaviors. Redeker et al. (2012; Chapter 2) demonstrated the validity and high reliability of the scales. Furthermore, they showed that the CLS complies with the strict criteria of a true circumplex. The circumplex is divided into eight octants representing eight different leadership styles. The leadership styles, their definitions, and exemplar items can be found in Table 1.
For this study a web-based questionnaire was used. Participants were approached through email. In the email a link was included, which directed the participants to the questionnaire. The questionnaire started with the following introduction, which was repeated on the top of each screen: “Indicate for each of the descriptions whether you think that people in general think this behavior is feminine and masculine. Participants were then asked to rate each item of the CLS on two 5-point Likert scales. One scale ranged from ‘not at all feminine’ to ‘very feminine’. The second scale ranged from ‘not at all masculine’ to ‘very masculine’. Bem (1974) argues the importance of measuring both masculinity and femininity, and thus possibly androgyne (highly masculine and feminine) in people, opposed to measuring masculinity and femininity as a bipolar scale. We, therefore, chose to also measure both masculinity and femininity in behaviors, as these behaviors can also be perceived as both (non-) masculine and (non-) feminine.

The eight leadership styles generated the following Cronbach’s Alphas: Coaching, $\alpha_{\text{masculine}} = .83$, $\alpha_{\text{feminine}} = .81$; inspirational, $\alpha_{\text{masculine}} = .64$, $\alpha_{\text{feminine}} = .80$; directive, $\alpha_{\text{masculine}} = .83$, $\alpha_{\text{feminine}} = .78$; authoritarian, $\alpha_{\text{masculine}} = .78$, $\alpha_{\text{feminine}} = .82$; distrustful, $\alpha_{\text{masculine}} = .79$, $\alpha_{\text{feminine}} = .76$; withdrawn, $\alpha_{\text{masculine}} = .54$, $\alpha_{\text{feminine}} = .72$; yielding, $\alpha_{\text{masculine}} = .86$, $\alpha_{\text{feminine}} = .77$; participative, $\alpha_{\text{masculine}} = .76$, $\alpha_{\text{feminine}} = .83$.

Results

For each of the eight leadership styles two scales were created. One scale represented the femininity ratings of the style, the other one represented the masculinity ratings of the style. Thus, 16 scales were created. We analyzed the data with 8 repeated measures ANOVAs, with femininity and masculinity as the within-subjects factor and sex of the participants as the between-subjects factor, allowing us to assess the effect of participants’ sex on the results. See Table 2 for means and standard deviations.
Table 2. Means and standard deviations of perceived masculinity/femininity of the leadership styles (Study 1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership Style</th>
<th>Masculinity</th>
<th></th>
<th>Femininity</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaching</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>0.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspirational</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>0.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directive</td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>0.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authoritarian</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>2.62</td>
<td>0.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distrustful</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>0.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Withdrawn</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>0.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yielding</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>0.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participative</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>0.47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. \(N = 41\). Means in a row with different superscripts differ significantly from each other (\(p < .05\)).

We found an interaction between participants’ sex and rated femininity and masculinity of the leadership styles for only two leadership styles. Female participants rated participative and yielding leadership as more feminine and less masculine, compared to the ratings of male participants, \(F_{\text{participative}} (1, 38) = 4.76, p < .05\), partial eta squared = .11; \(F_{\text{yielding}} (1, 38) = 4.12, p < .05\), partial eta squared = .10. However, effect sizes were small, compared to the main effects (see below).

Importantly and in line with Hypothesis 1, the analyses generated significant main effects for all leadership styles of the within-subjects factor (withdrawn leadership marginally), indicating that participants rated the leadership styles differently on femininity or masculinity. Coaching \((F [1, 38] = 95.14, p < .001, \text{partial eta squared} = .72)\), participative \((F [1, 38] = 95.22, p < .001, \text{partial eta squared} = .72)\), yielding \((F [1, 38] = 66.84, p < .001, \text{partial eta squared} = .64)\), and withdrawn leadership \((F [1, 38] = 3.66, p < .10, \text{partial eta squared} = .09)\) were rated as more feminine than masculine leadership styles. Inspirational \((F [1, 38] = 25.73, p < .001, \text{partial eta squared} = .40)\), directive \((F [1, 38] = 18.78, p < .001, \text{partial eta} \)
squared = .33), authoritarian \((F[1, 38] = 86.25, p < .001, \text{partial eta squared} = .69)\), and distrustful leadership \((F[1, 38] = 15.74, p < .001, \text{partial eta squared} = .29)\) were rated as more masculine than feminine leadership styles.

**Discussion**

Results of Study 1 show that, as expected, leadership styles high in communion are described as more feminine and leadership styles high in agency are rated as more masculine. Similarly, leadership styles low in communion are seen as more masculine than feminine and leadership styles low in agency are seen as more feminine than masculine. In Study 2, we set out to examine the beliefs that people have regarding the effectiveness of these circumplex leadership styles.

**Study 2**

**Method**

**Participants**

Participants in this study were 31 students (15 male, 16 female) from a large European University. Their age ranged from 18 to 26 years \((M = 20.10, SD = 2.30)\). Out of 31 participants 22 had a paid job. Their average working hours per week ranged from 4 to 35 \((M = 9.95, SD = 6.63)\).

**Material and procedure**

This study was conducted using a web-based questionnaire. Students were invited to a lab. Upon arrival, students were asked to take place in a cubicle where they could start completing the questionnaire. Participants were presented with the following introduction text, which was repeated on each screen: “indicate for each of the descriptions whether you think that people in general think this behavior is effective for a leader”. Each of the 116 items, see Study 1, was answered on a 5-point Likert scale. This scale ranged from ‘not at all effective’ to ‘very effective’. The following Cronbach’s Alphas were found: Coaching, \(\alpha = .91\); Inspirational, \(\alpha = .85\); Directive, \(\alpha = .80\); Authoritarian, \(\alpha = .79\); Distrustful, \(\alpha = .83\); Withdrawn, \(\alpha = .79\); Yielding, \(\alpha = .65\); Participative, \(\alpha = .88\).
Results

Scales were created for each leadership style. Each scale represented the effectiveness ratings of the leadership behaviors in each of the octants. Prior to testing the hypothesis, one-way ANOVA’s were conducted to test if there was an effect of sex of the participant on the effectiveness ratings of any of the eight leadership styles. No significant effect of sex was found. Means and standard deviations can be found in Table 3.

Table 3. Means and standard deviations of effectiveness ratings of the leadership styles (Study 2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Coaching</th>
<th>Inspirational</th>
<th>Directive</th>
<th>Authoritarian</th>
<th>Distrustful</th>
<th>Withdrawn</th>
<th>Yielding</th>
<th>Participative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>4.19^a</td>
<td>4.16^a</td>
<td>3.63^b</td>
<td>2.62^c</td>
<td>1.89^e</td>
<td>1.82^e</td>
<td>2.24^d</td>
<td>3.67^b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>0.55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. N = 31. Means in a row with different superscripts differ significantly from each other (p < .05).

Coaching and inspirational leadership were rated as the most effective leadership styles. Coaching was rated as significantly more effective than participative leadership (t [30] = 10.84, p < .001) and inspirational as more effective than directive leadership (t [30] = 5.23, p < .001). There was no significant difference in the rated effectiveness of coaching and inspirational leadership (t [30] = 0.74, p = .46). Distrustful and withdrawn leadership were seen as least effective, and they also did not differ from each other (t [30] = 1.09, p = .29).

Authoritarian leadership was perceived as more effective than distrustful leadership (t [30] = 12.53, p < .001) and yielding was rated as more effective than withdrawn leadership (t [30] = 6.16, p < .001). Again there was no significant difference in the rated effectiveness of distrustful and withdrawn leadership (t [30] = 1.09, p = .29). There was no significant difference between the rated effectiveness of directive and participative leadership (t [30] = -0.27, p = .79). However, directive leadership was perceived as more effective than authoritarian leadership (t [30] = 13.74, p < .001) and participative leadership was rated as
more effective than yielding leadership ($t_{[30]} = 14.51, p < .001$). Authoritarian leadership was rated as more effective than yielding leadership ($t_{[30]} = 3.14, p < .01$). Finally, directive leadership was perceived as more effective than yielding leadership ($t_{[30]} = 12.53, p < .001$) and participative leadership was rated as more effective than authoritarian leadership ($t_{[30]} = 6.50, p < .001$).

Hypothesis 2, which stated that styles high in both agentic and communal behaviors will be rated as more effective and styles low in both agency and communion as less effective, was therefore confirmed.

**Discussion**

As expected, the leadership styles that are both high in communal and agentic behaviors (i.e., coaching and inspirational leadership) are believed to be most effective for a leader. On the opposite site, distrustful and withdrawn leadership, both low in communion and in agency, are seen as the least effective styles. This shows that people do not see the effective leader as just agentic or task-oriented, but that effective leadership is both determined by communion and agency. This leads to the expectation that stereotypical beliefs about effective leadership are related to both female and to male behaviors.

However, as argued before, men and women seem to evoke different reactions with similar behaviors. Therefore, gender of the leader may make a difference in the effectiveness ratings of the behavior. We expect that behaviors that are rated as more masculine will also be seen as more effective for a male leader. Communal behaviors are expected to be perceived as more effective for female leaders. Finally, we expect yielding and withdrawn leadership to be perceived as more effective for male leaders. Study 3 will test these hypotheses.

**Study 3**

**Method**

**Participants**

The sample of this study consisted of 62 participants (27 male; 35 female). Participants’ age ranged from 17 to 66 years ($M = 26.90, SD = 13.45$). Out of 62 participants, 40 (65 %) had a
paid job. Their average working hours per week ranged from 8 to 40 hours \((M = 24.22, SD = 12.34)\). Data was collected as a convenience sample. Participants were approached through the indirect network of the experimenter.

**Material and procedure**

This study was conducted using a web-based questionnaire. Participants were approached through an email with a link directing to the questionnaire. The questionnaire started with a short introduction, repeated on every screen, which stated: “indicate for each of the descriptions whether you think that **people in general** think this leadership behavior is **effective when shown by a woman or by a man**”. Again, participants were asked to complete the CLS answering each of the 116 items, see Study 1, on two 5-point Likert scales. The first scale ranged from ‘**not at all effective for a woman**’ to ‘**very effective for a woman**’. The second scale ranged from ‘**not at all effective for a man**’ to ‘**very effective for a man**’.

The eight leadership styles generated the following Cronbach’s Alphas: Coaching, \(\alpha_{\text{male leader}} = .92, \alpha_{\text{female leader}} = .86\); inspirational, \(\alpha_{\text{male leader}} = .88, \alpha_{\text{female leader}} = .88\); directive, \(\alpha_{\text{male leader}} = .62, \alpha_{\text{female leader}} = .72\); authoritarian, \(\alpha_{\text{male leader}} = .88, \alpha_{\text{female leader}} = .78\); distrustful, \(\alpha_{\text{male leader}} = .92, \alpha_{\text{female leader}} = .91\); withdrawn, \(\alpha_{\text{male leader}} = .91, \alpha_{\text{female leader}} = .92\); yielding, \(\alpha_{\text{male leader}} = .80, \alpha_{\text{female leader}} = .90\); participative, \(\alpha_{\text{male leader}} = .86, \alpha_{\text{female leader}} = .74\).

**Results**

For each leadership style two separate scales were created. One scale pertained to the extent to which the leadership style was rated as effective for a female leader. The other scale pertained to the style’s rated effectiveness for a male leader. We used repeated measures ANOVA, with effectiveness ratings for male and female leaders as the within subjects factor and sex of the participant as the between-subjects factor. The means and standard deviations are reported in Table 4.
Table 4. Means and standard deviations of perceived effectiveness of the leadership styles shown by male/female leader (Study 3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership Style</th>
<th>Effectiveness male leader</th>
<th>Effectiveness female leader</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$M$</td>
<td>$SD$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaching</td>
<td>3.95$^b$</td>
<td>0.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspirational</td>
<td>4.16$^a$</td>
<td>0.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directive</td>
<td>3.65$^a$</td>
<td>0.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authoritarian</td>
<td>3.01$^a$</td>
<td>0.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distrustful</td>
<td>2.38$^a$</td>
<td>0.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Withdrawn</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>0.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yielding</td>
<td>2.30$^b$</td>
<td>0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participative</td>
<td>3.49$^b$</td>
<td>0.53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. N = 62. Means in a row with different superscripts differ significantly from each other ($p < .05$).*

No interaction effects of effectiveness ratings of male vs. female leaders and sex of the participant were found, except for a marginal effect on effectiveness ratings of directive leadership for male or female leaders. Male participants rated directive leadership as less effective for female leaders, compared to female participants ($F[1, 60] = 3.23, p < .10$, partial eta squared = .05). However, in line with the marginally significant finding, the effect size was small.

Importantly, most of the analyses generated significant main effects for the within subjects factor, indicating that participants rated the leadership styles differently on effectiveness for male compared to female leaders. As predicted in Hypothesis 3, coaching ($F[1, 60] = 21.86, p < .001$, partial eta squared = .27), and participative leadership ($F[1, 60] = 33.80, p < .001$, partial eta squared = .36) were rated as more effective for female leaders than for male leaders. Surprisingly, yielding leadership ($F[1, 60] = 21.94, p < .001$, partial eta squared = .27) was also perceived to be more effective for female compared to male leaders. Inspirational
(F [1, 60] = 7.06, p < .05, partial eta squared = .11), directive (F [1, 60] = 24.99, p < .001, partial eta squared = .29), authoritarian (F [1, 60] = 41.89, p < .001, partial eta squared = .41), and distrustful leadership (F [1, 60] = 18.03, p < .001, partial eta squared = .23) were rated as more effective for male leaders than for female leaders. Withdrawn leadership was not rated differently on effectiveness for male or female leaders (F [1, 60] = 2.10, p = .30).

Interestingly enough, although the results show differences between the leadership styles on the effectiveness ratings for male or female leaders, there was no difference in the overall effectiveness ratings for male and female leaders (M_total_male = 3.13, M_total_female = 3.14; t [61] = .31, p = .76). Thus, when examining all leadership behaviors together, male leader were not more – or less – effective than female leaders.

**Discussion**

We expected that, with the exception of styles high in communal behaviors (coaching and participative leadership), most leadership styles would be perceived as more effective for male leaders. However, results showed that only those styles that were rated as more masculine in Study 1 are also perceived as more effective for male leaders. Most styles that were rated as more feminine in Study 1 are also perceived as more effective for female leaders, with the exception of withdrawn leadership. A visual representation of the results of Study 1, Study 2, and Study 3 can be found in Figure 2.
Figure 2. Visual representation of results of Study 1, 2, & 3
General Discussion

The aim of the present set of studies was threefold. First, we aimed to examine the gender beliefs about leadership styles, expecting to find similar findings as previous studies (e.g. Vinkenburg et al., 2011). In order to study this we used a comprehensive leadership framework, the CLS, to get a broader image of leadership behaviors than was done in previous research. Additionally, we intended to illuminate which leadership styles are perceived as effective and which are perceived as ineffective. Study 2 showed that styles both high in communion - which were rated as more feminine in Study 1 - and high in agency - which were rated as more masculine - are perceived as most effective. Styles both low in communion - in Study 1 rated as more masculine - and low in agency – rated as more feminine in Study 1 - are rated as most ineffective. An easy conclusion would have been that feminine and masculine leadership styles are rated equally effective, and thus, male and female leaders are expected to be as effective. However, we wanted to extend the existing literature by going beyond this common deduction.

The division of the sexes of leadership positions is still highly unbalanced in favor of men. An explanation, which is in line with previous theorizing, could be that behaviors are perceived differently when shown by a male or a female leader (Butler & Geis, 1990; Carli, 1990, 1995, 1999; Eagly, Makhijani, & Klonsky, 1992; Giacalone & Riordan, 1990; Ridgeway, 1982; Rudman, 1998; Wood & Karten, 1986; Wosinska, Dabul, Whetstone-Dion, & Cialdini, 1996).

A third study was conducted in which we examined whether some leadership behaviors are perceived to be more effective for male or for female leaders. The latter study showed that, partially in line with Hypothesis 3, four out of eight styles are perceived to be more effective for male leaders, compared to female leaders. The styles that are perceived as more masculine are also rated as more effective for male leaders. Moreover, and also in line with Hypothesis 3, the styles high in communion (coaching and participative leadership) are rated to be more effective for female leaders. Contrary to Hypothesis 3, yielding leadership was also rated as more effective (or less ineffective) for female leaders than for male leaders, indicating that most styles that are seen as more feminine are also perceived to be more effective for female leaders. The exception was withdrawn leadership, - which was rated as a feminine style - which is not perceived as more effective for either a female or a male leader.

Interestingly, although withdrawn leadership style is perceived as an ineffective leadership
style, the equally ineffective style ‘distrustful leadership’ is still seen as less ineffective for male compared to female leaders. An explanation for this might be the "think-manager-think male" phenomenon (Schein, 1973; 1975). The leadership prototype is supposedly closer to the male prototype than the female prototype. So, although distrustful leadership is rated as an ineffective leadership style, it is still perceived as more effective for male leaders, because the idea of a manager is still more closely linked to the male prototype. However, overall effectiveness was not different for male or female leaders, indicating that male or female leaders are not perceived as more effective in their leadership, but that there are only perceived differences of effectiveness in specific leadership styles. The latter result might be used to argue against the belief that effective leadership is perceived to be masculine, or the "think-manager-think-male" phenomenon.

One of the most important strengths of the present studies is the methods we used. As a result of using a complete, continuous model of leadership, the leadership circumplex, we were able to provide a comprehensive overview of the beliefs people have about leadership styles. Unlike previous studies, which either used a smaller subset of leadership styles (Cann & Siegfried, 1990; Embry et al., 2008; Vinkenburg et al., 2011) or presented participants with the word manager (e.g. Brenner et al., 1989; Dodge et al. 1995; Duehr & Bono, 2006; Schein, 1973, 1975, 2001; Schein et al., 1996), we were able to show that the beliefs people in general have about leadership might not be as negative for female leaders as could be concluded based on the commonly cited "think-manager-think-male" phenomenon.

Although more leadership styles were perceived as more effective for male than female leaders, there was still a vast amount of behaviors that was rated as more effective for female leaders and there were no overall effectiveness differences between male and female leaders. Importantly, the styles that were rated more effective for women included styles that were rated most effectively in Study 2, independent of gender.

A conclusion that could be drawn from these results is that leaders should generally show gender congruent behaviors, which is in line with previous studies demonstrating the benefits of acting in a role-congruent manner (Broverman, Vogel, Broverman, Clarkson, & Rosenkrantz, 1972; Eagly, 1987; Eagly, Wood, & Diekman, 2000; Heilman, 2001). To be perceived as more effective than their male counterparts, female leaders need to demonstrate communal behaviors, for instance by being supportive, accepting and
appreciative, while men need to demonstrate agency, for example by acting competitively, visionary, and persuasively. When being in a leadership role, both men and women are wise to be aware of these perceptual differences of their behaviors. Leadership behaviors that are perceived to be generally effective might in practice be effective for one gender but less effective for the other. For example, directive leadership is generally seen as quite effective. However, it is especially effective for male leaders compared to female leaders. Women using directive leadership behaviors might be responded to more negatively. Combined with studies emphasizing the masculine leadership prototype, this might potentially lead to learned helplessness in women who start to believe that although their behavior should be effective it is still perceived as less effective and, consequently, this might lead for them to stop trying (e.g., Abramson, Seligman, & Teasdale, 1978). However, when they are made aware of the gender-dependent beliefs regarding effectiveness of leadership behaviors, by for instance training or coaching them to use styles that are both gender-congruent and effective, they possibly have a better chance of reaching their full leadership potential.

The findings of the present paper should be treated with some caution. Our methodology aimed to study beliefs about gender differences in leadership styles and leadership effectiveness, not to study the beliefs about the necessary leadership to get promoted into leadership positions. Moreover, we did not define the level of leadership in our studies. The glass ceiling effect, which describes the phenomenon that women encounter an invisible barrier when pursuing leadership positions (Morrison & von Glinow, 1990), prevents women from getting into leadership positions. To get through this barrier, and thus to get promoted into leadership positions, specific leadership behaviors (i.e. inspirational motivation) have been shown to be crucial (Vinkenburg et al., 2011). In related vein, Rosette and Tost (2010) showed that women in top leadership position are stereotypically evaluated more positively, compared to women in middle management positions, and under certain circumstances even compared to male leaders. This suggests that when leaders climb the corporate ladder, stereotypes about their leadership styles and leadership effectiveness possibly change.

The present paper aimed to study gender stereotypes about leadership. Therefore, we focused on leadership behaviors in general. However, it may be that beliefs about leadership styles differ in different contexts (e.g., Johns, 2006). It may be that beliefs about what is effective for a male or female leader differs when for example the gender-ratio of
employees in an organization is taken into account. For example, it may be that in a feminine organization, such as a health care organization, feminine leadership styles are believed to be more effective for both male and female leaders. Future studies may benefit from adding a specific context when measuring gender beliefs about leadership.

Previous studies (e.g., Brenner et al., 1989; Dodge et al., 1995) have shown that male and female participants might have different beliefs about gender-differences related issues. Throughout our studies, we found limited and inconsistent effects of the sex of the participant. However, these differences did not influence our results, bolstering our confidence in the findings. Moreover, we believe that the methods we used helped to limit the potential effects of participants’ sex. That is, we specifically asked participants how they thought people in general would rate the behavior. Therefore, the results might be more generalizable and less influenced by the sex of the participant than was the case in previous studies. Another potential limitation of our sample is the fact that we examined the relationships in a Western European country, which makes it difficult to generalize the results to other countries. Previous work by Vinkenburg et al. (2010) found comparable findings in the U.S. and the Netherlands, provided some evidence that we would also obtain similar results in other Western countries. However, whether the beliefs regarding effective (male and female) leadership will be similar in different cultures remains to be seen and future research should examine the role of different cultural beliefs regarding leadership (e.g., power distance; Hofstede & Bond, 1984).

The present study has shown that people have beliefs about the effectiveness and gender-related stereotypes of an elaborate set of leadership behaviors. Future research should focus on a more comprehensive perspective of leadership behaviors. This will help to paint a more comprehensive picture of all leadership behaviors that managers can show and will aid organizations to effectively train and coach (future) leaders.

In conclusion, we have shown that the perception of leadership effectiveness is strongly influenced by gender stereotypes. However, we have also shown, by measuring a comprehensive set of leadership behaviors, that the stereotypical perceptions are not as negative for women as is often believed. As long as leaders from both genders behave gender congruently they may be perceived as equally effective leaders.