

ABSTRACT

THESIS: The Influence of Psychology of Women Class on Feminist Identity, Perceptions of Female Leaders, and Leadership Qualities

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Women are underrepresented as leaders in the United States in political and corporate sectors. This may be due in part to the social role theory which asserts that women are unlikely to adopt qualities that would align with the qualities needed for a position of power if women do not see other women in positions of power in society. The present study recruited participants from Psychology of Women classes to examine whether participation in a Psychology of Women course would increase feminist identity, and thus increase positive attitudes toward a female leader and increase transactional leadership qualities in women. Results of a mediational analysis indicated that feminist identity did not serve as a mediator between Psychology of Women course and perceptions of female leaders, or transactional qualities in women. Future research should incorporate a larger sample as well as examine samples with more diversity. Implications from this research suggest that Psychology of Women should shape the curriculum to incorporate more direct experiences with leadership and feminism.