Characteristics of leadership-oriented women

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The present study explores within-gender differences between high leadership-oriented women and low leadership-oriented women regarding their characteristics and attitudes. One hundred and ninety-two Japanese undergraduate women (N=192) were administered a questionnaire which contained items on the ideal woman, desirability of marriage, the ideal spouse, career plans, career orientation, work-related values, and attitudes towards taking leadership roles. Although high leadership-oriented women were found to share ideal feminine attributes with low leadership-oriented women, they incorporated more instrumental attributes into their ideal woman than the low group. The high group was found to be highly career-oriented, and their work-related values were more oriented towards promotion and responsible jobs. Regardless of leadership orientation, women strongly reacted towards sex discrimination in allocating leadership roles. However, high leadership-oriented women appeared to be aware of gender role constraints in the social system, and of the potentially serious situational barriers preventing women from taking leadership roles.
Key words: leadership orientation, instrumental attributes, feminine attributes, career-orientation

Characteristics of Leadership-Oriented Women

Although the number of women leaders has increased world-wide, it is still very small compared to men in leadership positions. Previous studies on women leadership have attempted to explain the limited emergence of women leaders by comparing the personality characteristics and motivation of men and women leaders. Although some studies found that men and women differed in terms of ability and motives (e.g., Bass, 1967; Miner, 1977; Rosenfeld & Fowler, 1976), some studies did not identify gender differences regarding leadership behavior and motive (e.g., Brown, 1979; Chapman, 1975; Miner, 1974). In fact, very few studies that compared women leaders and non-leader women found that women leaders differed in personality characteristics. That is to say, comparing women only with men (i.e., exploring between-gender

differences) is not adequate in studying women leadership. In order to have a better understanding of women leadership, it is also necessary to examine within-gender differences among women.

Thus, the present study attempts to explore within-gender differences by comparing the characteristics of women who aspire to become leaders (i.e., high leadership-oriented women) and women who do not aspire to become leaders (i.e., low leadership-oriented women). Leadership orientation is defined as an aspiration towards taking leadership roles, leadership positions or leader-like positions. Studying the characteristics of leadership-oriented women can provide base-line information about who leadership-oriented women are; furthermore, this information is expected to be useful in future studies on women leadership and to provide a better understanding of women in actual leadership positions.

In the present study, the characteristics of high leadership-oriented women are examined in terms of self-as-a woman, career-orientation, and attitudes toward women taking on leadership roles.

Self-as-a woman

Previous studies reported that women executives generally differed from women employees in the same way that men executives differed from men employees (Bartol, 1976, Brief & Aldag, 1975; Brief & Oliver, 1976). Managerial women were different from women in general (Pfeffer & Shapiro, 1978). They were more similar to stereotyped men role models (Hennig, 1971), more analytical, rationally oriented, and competitive (Lannon, 1977); they also incorporated masculine characteristics (Banfield, 1976); in addition, Casey (1975) found that the interests of women leaders differed from non-leader women. Women leaders were reported to have a preference for positions of eminence, freedom of thought, challenge, and interpersonal contact, whereas the non-leaders favored artistic activities.

Based on the above-mentioned findings, it is hypothesized that high leadership-oriented women are also likely to differ from low leadership-oriented women. Leadership has always been associated with masculine attributes. Moreover, attributes associated with leaders and attributes associated with women are believed to be incompatible. Thus, it is important to explore how high leadership-oriented women perceive feminine ideals. In the present study, this issue is examined by means of comparing high and low leadership-oriented women as regards the characteristics of the ideal woman, the desirability of marriage, and the ideal spouse one wishes to have.

Career-Orientation

A number of studies indicate that certain personality characteristics, particularly high self-esteem and instrumentality, may predict vocational orientation and choice (Gilbert, 1985; Jones & Lamke, 1985; Lemkau, 1983, Metzler-Brennan, Lewis, & Gerard, 1985; Spence & Helmreich, 1980, 1981). Jenkins (1989) found that women in different professions (college and non-college teaching and entrepreneurial positions) differed in their career plans, job values, perceptions, and satisfaction. These findings indicate that certain types of personality characteristics can lead to differences in career orientation. It may therefore be expected that, on the basis of differences in leadership-orientation

levels, high leadership-oriented women and low leadership-oriented women will have a different level of career orientation, career plan, career choice, and work-related values.

Attitudes towards Taking on Leadership Roles

Previous studies explored attitudes towards women managers using the Women As Managers Scale (WAMS) and the Managerial Attitudes Toward Women Executive Scale (MATWES). These studies (e.g., Dubno, 1985; Terborg, Peters, Illgen, & Smith, 1977; Wakabayashi & Munekata, 1986; Welsh, 1979) found that women had more favourable attitudes towards women as managers than men. Examining attitudes towards taking leadership roles may thus explain attitudes that can hinder women from taking leadership roles.

In this study, the ideal woman, desirability of marriage, and the ideal spouse, career plan, career-orientation, and work-related values, and attitudes towards taking leadership roles are explored and compared between high leadership-oriented women and low leadership-oriented women.

Method

Participants: One hundred and ninety two (n=192) Japanese women undergraduate students took part on voluntary basis.

Measures:

The Leadership Orientation Scale (LOS): The Leadership Orientation Scale (LOS) was constructed by Tin Tin Htun (1995) (see appendix). This scale was based on the Directiveness Factor Scale (Lorr & More, 1980), the Miner Sentence Completion Scale (Miner, 1974), and related findings from the literature. The scale consists of nine items which measure an individual's preference for leadership behavior and leader-like positions, as well as the desire to become a leader. The highest score for the leadership orientation scale was 45 and the lowest was 9. Factor analysis showed only one factor as having a significant inclination toward leadership positions. The alpha coefficient of the LOS is .89. The conceptual validity of the LOS has been found to be high (Tin Tin Htun & Yamamoto, 1997).

The Ideal Woman Scale: The scale was based on Matsui's classification of types of women (Matsui, Ezaki, & Yamamoto, 1983). It contains 22 adjective traits, with respondents rating each item on a 5-point rating scale (1 = Don't want to be like that, 5 = Very much want to be like that).

The Desirability of Marriage: The desirability of marriage was measured on a 5-point scale (1 = do not want to get married to 5 = want to get married very much).

The Ideal Spouse Scale: The scale was based on the masculinity part of the BSRI (Bem, 1972) and on the classification of types of men by Matsui et al. (1983). It contains 12 traits with the respondents rating their degree of preference on a 5-point scale for each trait (1 = Do not prefer the type, 5 = Prefer the type very much).

Career Plan: Career plan was measured by intention to work in the future, choice of occupation, and length of working.

Career Orientation: In order to measure career orientation, items from the "Questionnaire for the In Charge of the Personnel Department" (Kokusai Jyosei Gakkai Single Kenkyu Han, 1987) were employed. The questionnaire contains items concerning attitudes towards career advancement, recognition at work, and confidence in one's ability to work. Items were rated on a 5-point rating scale (1 = Strongly disagree, 5 = Strongly agree).

Work-Related Values: To measure work-related values, "The Work-related Values Scale" (Morinaga, 1994) was employed. Items were rated on a 5-point rating scale (1 = Strongly disagree, 5 = Strongly agree).

Attitudes towards Taking Leadership Roles and Related Issues: Items on attitude towards taking leadership roles were concerned with issues encountered by women in leadership positions. The statements were formulated on the basis of general situations and stereotypic attitudes which women leaders have to encounter. The following statements were employed: (1) It's natural for men to take leadership roles because they are men; (2) Want to take leadership roles in men majority groups; (3) Want to take leadership roles in women majority groups; (4) If you were in a leadership position, you would follow a man's lead, even for the tasks you are good at; (5) When men lead women should follow obediently; (6) Re-

gardless of gender, the most capable person should become the leader; (7) You feel anxious about a woman leader's ability to lead; (8) If you were a leader, you would feel disturbed by negative reactions from men subordinates; (9) You would take advice from men subordinates. The respondents had to rate whether they agreed or disagreed with each statement.

Results and Discussion

The Ideal Woman, The Desirability of Marriage, & The Ideal Spouse

One-way analysis of variance was used to examine how high leadership-oriented women differ from low leadership-oriented women in terms of the ideal woman, the ideal spouse, and the desirability of marriage. High leadership-oriented women did not differ from low leadership-oriented women in highly valued stereotypically feminine traits such as being lively, understanding, healthy, sophisticated, pure, kind, cheerful, and gentle (Figure 1). This indicates that high leadership-oriented women valued the ideal attributes of a woman just as equally as low leadership-oriented women. However, it is significant that high leadership-oriented women incorporated characteristics such as being self-controlled, dynamic, and intelligent into their ideal woman image that low leadership-oriented women did not. This indicates that high leadership-oriented women value both feminine attributes and instrumental attributes. This also suggests that high leadership-oriented women's wish to hold on to feminine aspects as well as the wish to possess characteristics that can make them stronger.

This finding is not consistent with previous studies which reported women managers as having more masculine than feminine characteristics (Banfield, 1976; Bartol, 1976; Brief & Aldag, 1975; Brief & Oliver, 1976; Hennig, 1971; Lannon, 1971). This discrepancy is probably due to the different eras within which the studies took place. The previous studies were conducted in the 70's when women leaders were relatively rare and the male leadership model was in demand. This may have put pressure on women to discard their feminine side and adopt masculine attributes. However, the present study was conducted in the 90's,
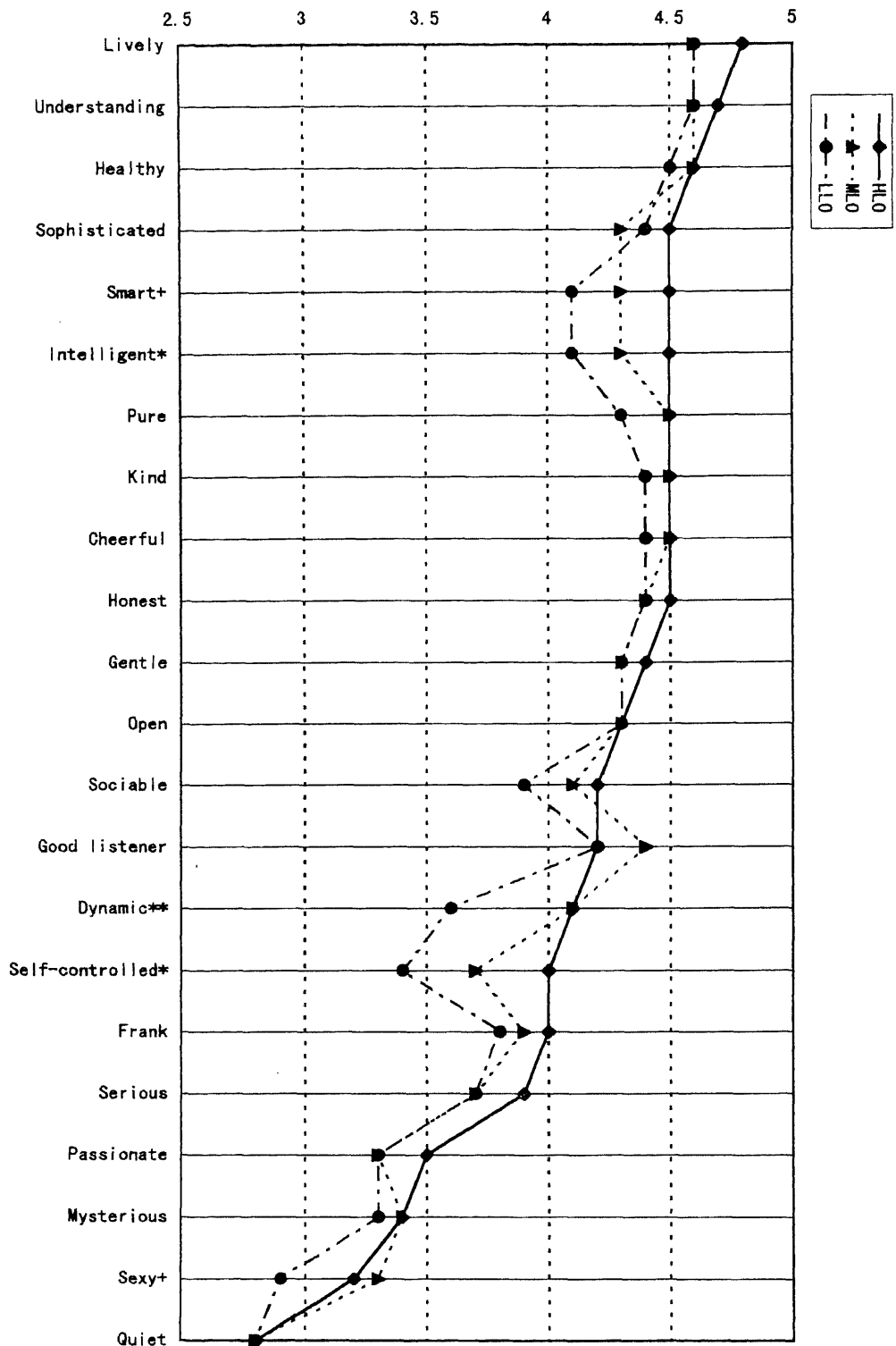
Fig. 1　The Ideal Woman of High, Medium, and Low Leadership-Oriented Women

a time when masculine attributes, especially of the instrumental kind, were not exclusive to men; this was also a period when expressive attributes were expected in leaders more than ever before. Therefore, with regard to the present study, leadership-oriented women were able to value their feminine side and incorporate instrumental traits that are also important elements of a leader. This implies the emergence of a new prototype of woman leader who is both expressive and instrumental. Looking at this from a cultural perspective, such an incorporation of feminine attributes might also result from the relatively intense socialization of highly valued ideal feminine traits in Japanese culture.

The Desirability of Marriage

Although all three groups generally wanted to get married, high leadership-oriented women showed less interest in marriage than medium and low leadership-oriented women (Figure 2). This implies that although they want to get married, marriage is not a priority in their lives.

The Ideal Spouse

Regarding the type of ideal spouse, no differences were observed among the three groups, except for high leadership-oriented women not liking "quiet" men (Figure 3). That is, they shared the same type of ideal spouse as other women. This implies that as a woman they desire to have the same ideal spouse as women in general. However, high leadership-oriented women wanted

to become dynamic and lively women. They are therefore likely to prefer a partner or spouse who matches their activeness and liveliness, which may lead them to dislike quiet men.

Career Plan, Career Orientation, & Work-Related Values

Chi square analyses were conducted for intention to work in the future, choice of career, and continuation of working after marriage and child-birth to examine differences between high leadership-oriented women and low leadership-oriented women regarding a career plan. No difference was observed among groups regarding wanting to work in the future, indicating that young (Japanese) women of today like to work. Regarding their preferred type of occupation, the majority wished to enter professions; however, high leadership-oriented women had a more marked intention to choose manager roles as their future occupation than their counterparts, whereas low leadership-oriented women chose more the positions of self-employed and office-worker (Table 1). This seems to suggest that the leadership-oriented women possessed higher vocational expectations than the low group. Although no statistical differences were observed, the majority of high leadership-oriented women showed the desire to work throughout their lives (Table 1). This implies the importance of work for high leadership-oriented women. This need was also reflected in career orientation.

To examine the differences between high leadership-oriented women and low leadership-oriented women regarding career orientation, one way analyses of variance were conducted for each item in the career orientation measure and the Work-related Values Scale. The desire to be promoted, to receive more responsibility and recognition for their work, and the willingness to work hard and be totally focused on their work differentiated high from low leadership-oriented women (Figure 4). Regarding work-related values, high leadership-oriented women and low leadership-oriented women shared a number of values. However, the high leadership-oriented group put greater emphasis on having a good working atmosphere, a responsible and important job, and a job with a
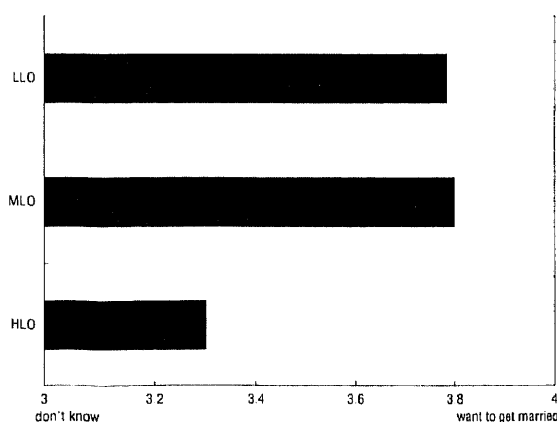

Fig. 2 Desire to Get Married

chance for promotion (Figure 5). On the whole, the results indicate that high leadership-oriented women have a stronger career-orientation as well as greater ambitiousness about their careers. Based on the same principles as previous studies indicating the association between high self-esteem and instrumentality on the one hand, and vocational orientation and choice on the other (Gilbert, 1985; Jones & Lamke, 1985; Lemkau, 1983, Metzler-Brennan, Lewis, & Gerard, 1985; Spence & Helmreich, 1980, 1981), the strong career

orientation of leadership-oriented women can be attributed to their instrumental side.

Attitudes towards Taking Leadership Roles

Chi-square analyses were computed to examine the attitudinal differences between the high and low groups (Table 2). High leadership-oriented women were more willing to take leadership roles in both men-majority groups and women-majority groups than low leadership-oriented women. This finding also underpins the conceptual validity of

Table 1　Planning to Work in the Future, Preferred Occupation, and Intended

	HLO (n =48)	MLO (n =95)	LLO (n =49)	X^2
Planning to work in the future	97.8%	98.9%	100.0%	1.03
Preferred Type of Occupation				
Company worker/government employee	10.9	4.3	0.0	31.44*
Manager	8.7	2.1	0.0	
Private enterprise	2.2	0.0	6.4	
Self-employed	6.5	8.6	10.7	
Part-time employee	0.0	0.0	2.1	
Office worker	2.2	10.0	10.6	
Saleperson/Business women	0.0	1.1	0.0	
Professional	54.4	58.1	51.1	
Housewife/homemaker	0.0	5.4	6.4	
Manual Labourer	0.0	0.0	2.1	
Others	15.1	10.8	10.6	
Intended Period of Working				
Stop working after getting married	4.4	5.4	6.4	8.5
Continue working until child-birth	4.4	8.6	10.6	
Stop working after getting married for sometime and reemployed	19.6	33.3	40.4	
Work throughout the life	71.7	52.7	42.6	

Note. HLO = High Leadership Orientation Group, MLO = Medium Leadership Orientation Group, LLO = Low Leadership Orientation Group.
* p < .05

Table 2　Attitudes towards Taking Leadership Roles (Percentage in Agreement only)

|	HLO (n =48)	MLO (n =95)	LLO (n =49)
Taking advice from male subordinates	93.8%	93.7%	97.9%
Disturbed by negative reactions from male subordinates	89.6	91.6	85.4
Regardless of gender, the most capable person should be the leader	85.4	91.6	95.8
Following a male's lead, even for the tasks one is good at	81.3	88.2	78.7
Wish to become a leader in female majority group **	50.0	18.1	4.3
Feeling anxious about a female leader's ability to lead	47.9	33.7	29.2
Wish to become a leader in male majority group **	37.5	14.0	2.1
It's natural for males to become leaders	16.7	11.6	14.6
When males lead, females should follow obediently	14.6	13.7	20.8
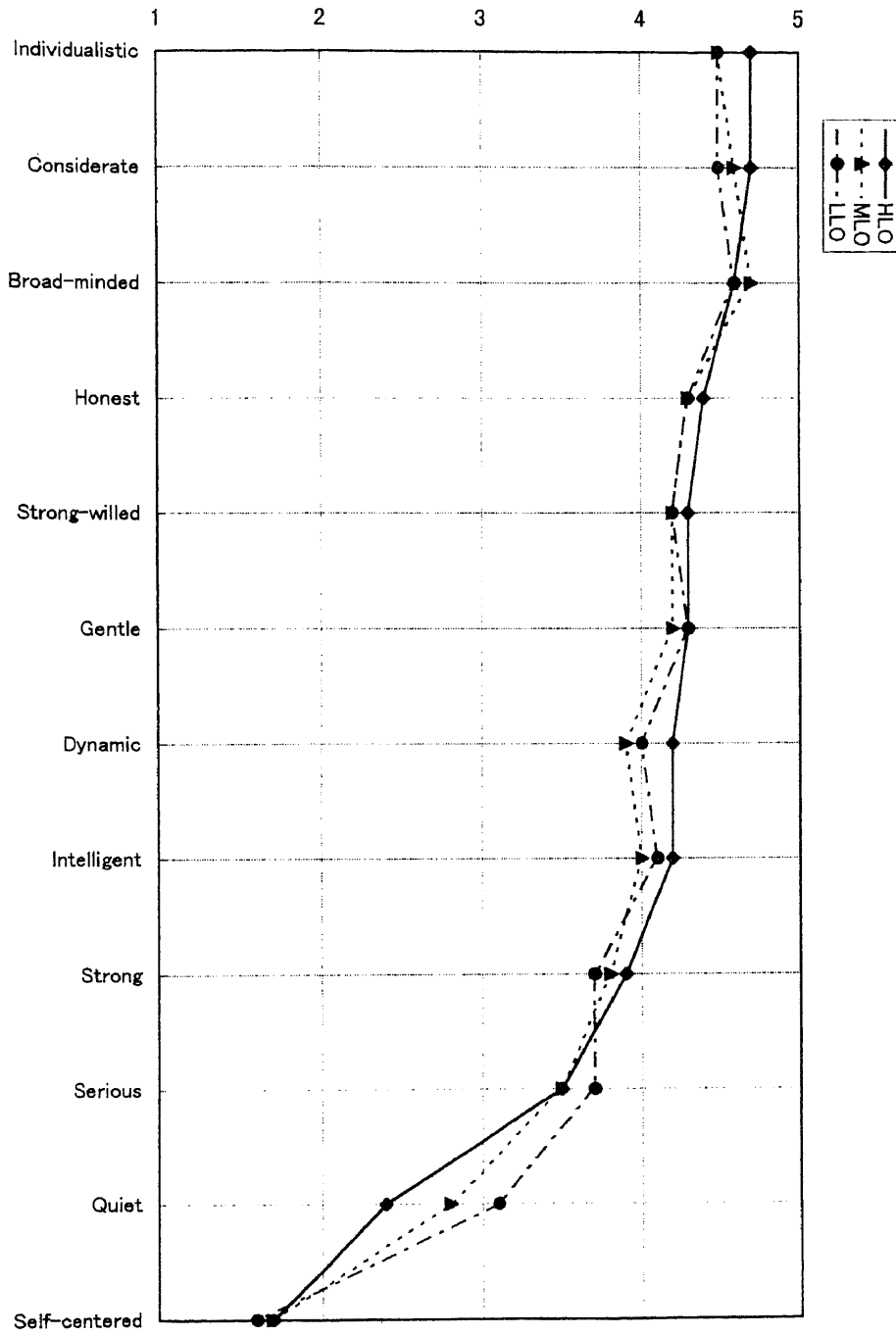
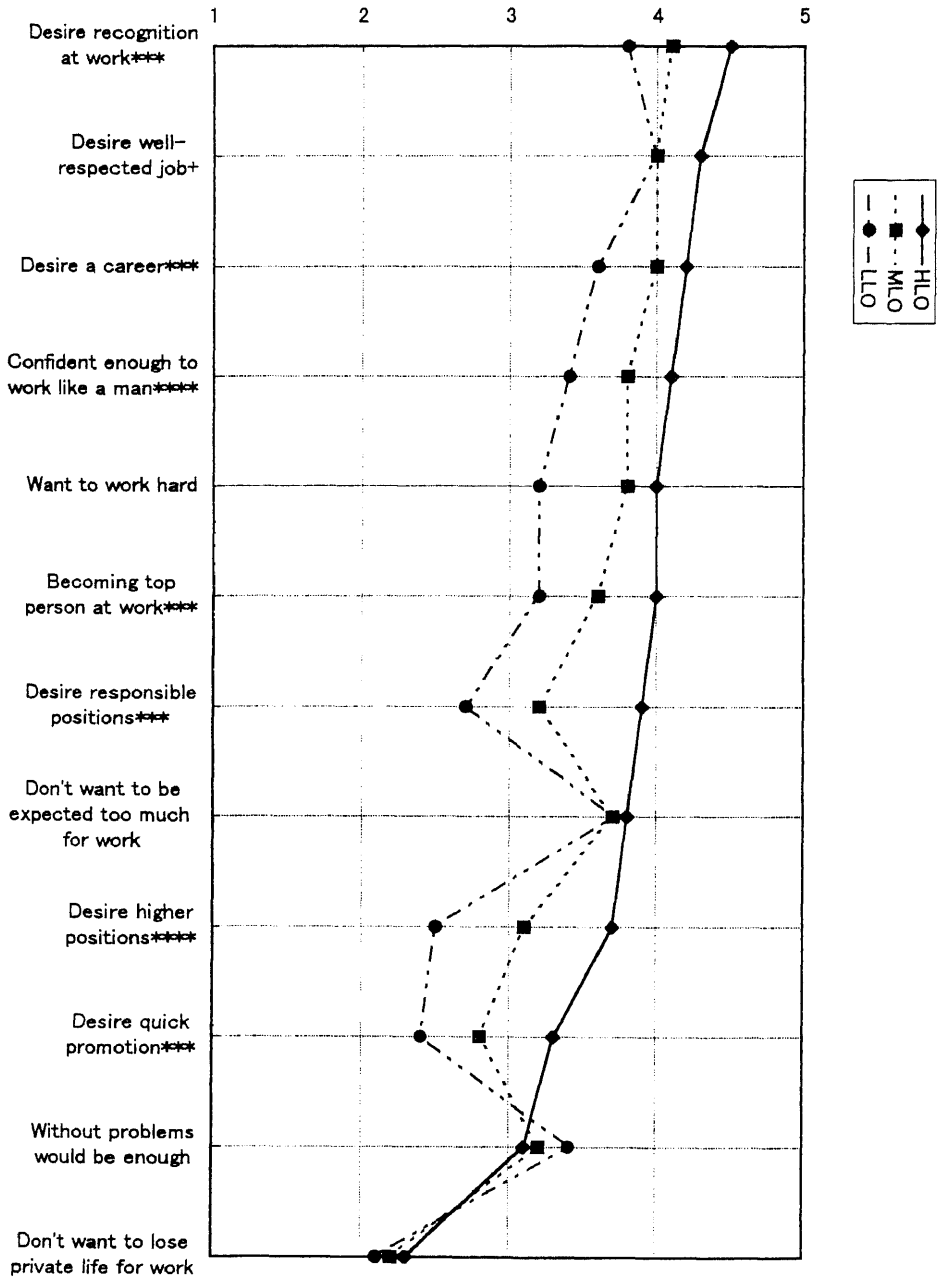Fig. 3 The Ideal Spouse of High, Medium, and Low Leadership-Oriented Women

Fig. 4 Career Orientation of High, Medium, and Low Leadership-Oriented Women
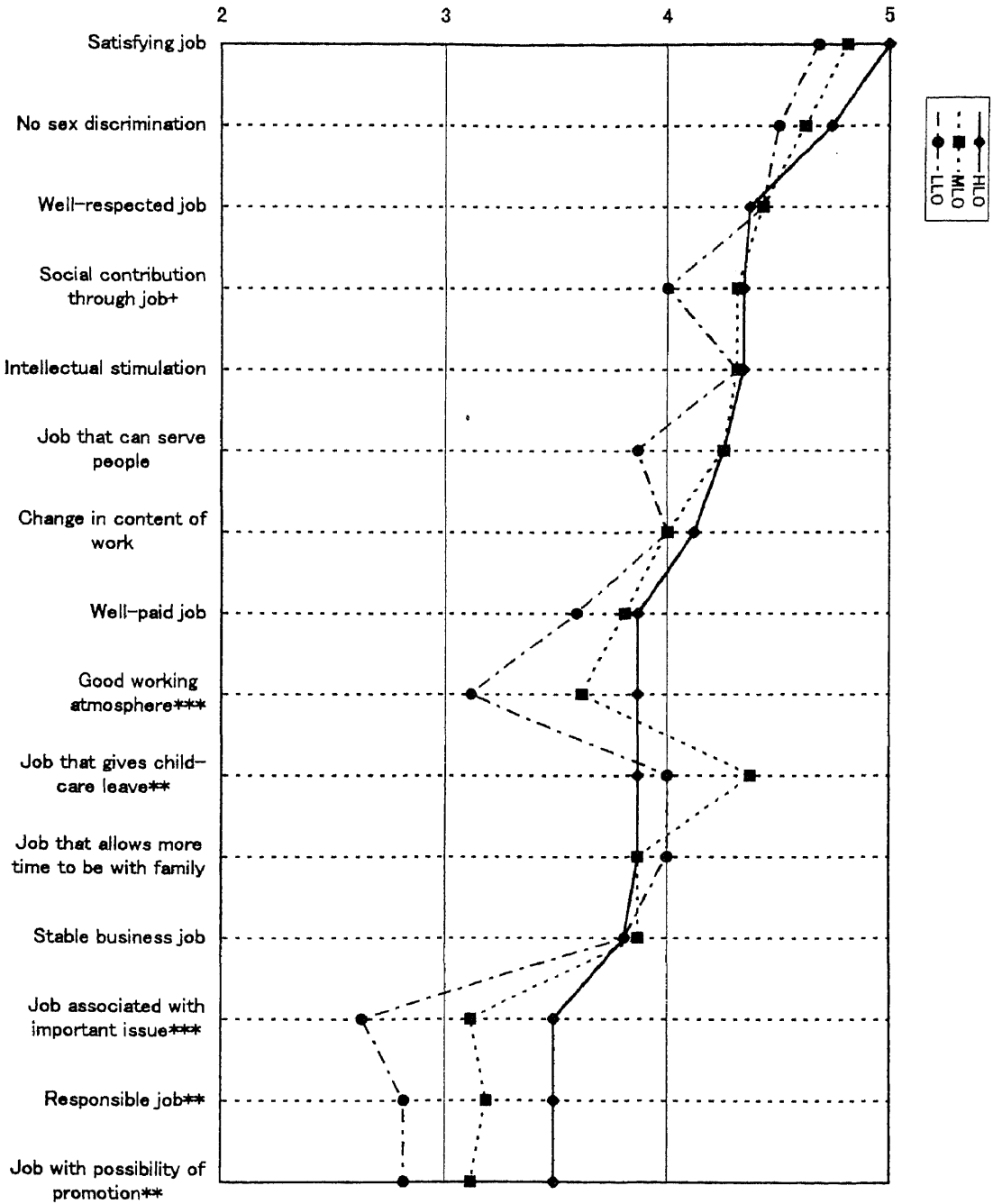
Fig. 5 Work-Related Values of High, Medium, and Low Leadership-Oriented Women

the Leadership Orientation Scale.

Apart from the wish to become leaders in both men-majority groups and women-majority groups, the attitudes of high leadership-oriented women did not differ from low leadership-oriented women in gender and leadership issues. Regardless of leadership orientation, women believed that the most capable person should become a leader regardless of gender; moreover, they did not agree that men should take on or be given leadership roles because of their gender. However, they would accept men leadership even for the jobs they were good at, and were willing to take advice from men subordinates if they were in leadership positions. This is probably not because they do not want to become leaders, but because they may want to avoid negative reactions towards them taking leadership roles in a men-dominated presence. This points to the constraints of a social system and gender roles that favor men as leaders.

Although high leadership-oriented women prefer to take leadership roles more than low leadership-oriented women, they are likely to feel disturbed by negative reactions of men subordinates. They appear to feel anxious about woman leader's leadership ability to some extent. This implies that regardless of leadership orientation, women in general appear to feel that they are not supposed to take leadership positions in men's presence. This may be due to social order and gender role constraints which are in favor of men taking leadership roles and positions.

The above-mentioned findings tend to support those from previous studies. Studies have demonstrated that due to the power of sex-role norms, dominant women avoid leadership positions (e.g., Fleischer & Chertkoff, 1986; Nyquist & Spence, 1986). Sakata & Kurokawa (1992) also found that although women avoided taking on leadership roles, they incorporated direct and task-oriented leadership more than men when performing their tasks. If leadership-oriented women feel reluctant to take leadership roles in the presence of men, this tendency may have an inhibiting effect on exercising leadership potential.

Although in the previous studies women were found to be more favorably disposed than men in their attitudes towards women managers (Dubno,

1985; Terborg, Peters, Illgen, & Smith, 1977; Wakabayashi & Munekata, 1986; Welsh, 1979), the present study did not show within-gender differences regarding issues that place women leaders into subordinate positions. This may be due to the different nature of the measurements. The present study focuses on both self-as-a-leader and women leaders, whereas the previous studies focused on general attitudes towards women. It seems that although women tend to show more favorable attitudes towards women taking leadership roles, they may show inhibitions when they consider themselves as leaders.

On the whole, the present study portrayed what leadership-oriented women are like on the basis of their ideals, future career planning, and work-related values. These aspects were also found to be capable of distinguishing high leadership-oriented women from low leadership-oriented women. As mentioned above, although leadership-oriented women shared feminine ideals with low leadership-oriented women, they have stronger ideals and ambitions than their counterparts. They value both feminine attributes and instrumental attributes. This suggests the possibility of a new prototype of women leader in the future.

Regardless of leadership orientation, women strongly reacted toward gender-discrimination in taking leadership roles. However, high leadership-oriented women appeared to be quite aware of gender role constraints and the social system. These constraints are probably strong in a highly masculine-value-oriented culture such as modern-day Japan. In other words, gender roles and the social system can be considered to be potentially serious situational barriers for women in taking leadership roles.

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Appendix   Factor Loadings of the Leadership Orientation Scale

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Communality
Prefer positions that allow decision making in a group	0.83	−0.12	0.70
Prefer an influential position	0.80	0.25	0.70
Like directing people	0.80	−0.16	0.67
Wish to become a leader	0.79	−0.25	0.69
Usually lead peers and friends	0.73	−0.14	0.56
Want to be a manager rather than a subordinate	0.67	0.27	0.53
Want to attain a prestigious position	0.62	0.28	0.47
Want to give orders	0.55	0.08	0.31
Want to give my own opinion first in a conversation or discussion	0.53	−0.13	0.30