

Background

- There is a longstanding trend for men to disproportionately occupy senior leadership positions, such as Fortune 500 CEOs (92%), of S&P 500 board directors (68%), and US congresspersons (72%); (Catalyst, 2023), (Spencer Stuart, 2022), (Schaeffer, 2023), which reflects gender disparity concerning women's leadership roles. Research indicating women's equal efficacy as leaders contrasts with these skewed numbers, which are in part due to gender stereotypes (Eagly, & Karau, 2002)
- A notable difference in this trend occurs within Ontario's hospital system, where 52% of the 127 CEOs identify as a woman. This gender balance offers a unique opportunity to examine the career ascension processes of these women and provides insight into their leadership journeys.
- A partner for this research is Proximity Institute, an independent charitable organization that partners with Ontario hospital leaders to advance their effectiveness through leadership development and change leadership. They also work collaboratively to identify, develop and ready a quality pipeline of emerging CEO talent.
- This study explores the ascension processes of women hospital CEOs and senior leadership development practices within Ontario's Hospital system.

Research Questions

- To what extent are hospital CEO job roles associated with communal versus agentic activities, and how might this relate to perceptions surrounding women's perceived fit with the CEO job role?
- How do onboarding processes relate to women's experiences in entering a CEO role?
- How might CEO succession planning influence the hiring of women CEOs?
- How do CEO succession planning and onboarding processes relate to perceptions of job-role fit and the amplification or dilution of gender stereotypes?

Methods & Analyses

Methodologically, this research conducts semi-structured interviews with women hospital CEOs and separately interviews board chairs involved in their appointments, facilitated through Zoom. Interviews are recorded with consent and transcribed using Zoom's textual transcription service, then refined for accuracy.

Transcriptions then undergo Abductive thematic analysis using NVivo 14 software, identifying and coding emerging themes and subthemes. This approach reveals key dimensions within the ascension processes of women CEOs.

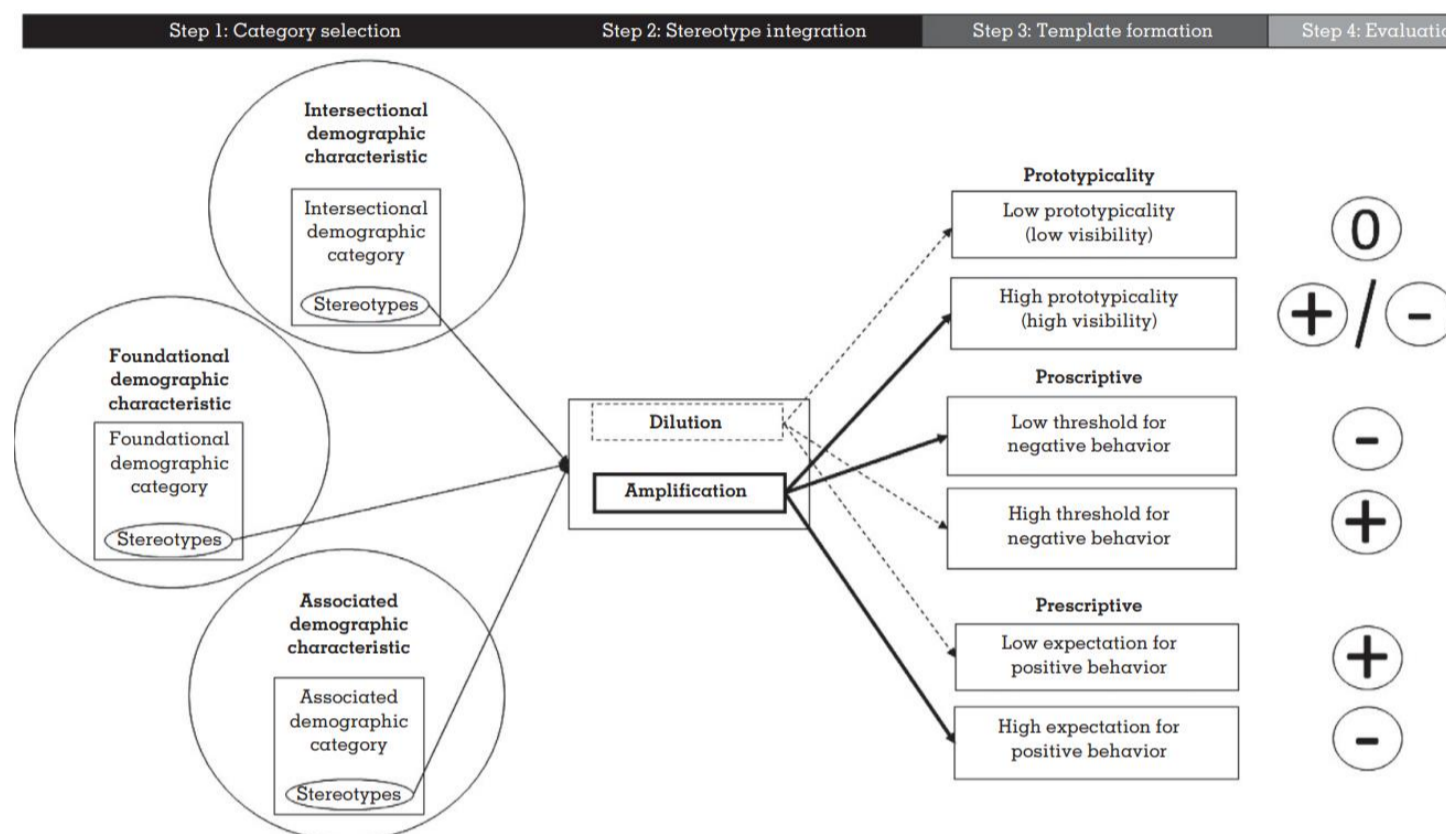
Future Direction

- Contrasting Case studies with CEO/ Board chair dyads
- Quantitative Data analysis: Five years of Hospital financial and patient-care metrics, CEO compensation data, and among others
- Potential Interview and data collection on male CEOs

Figures

Figure 1

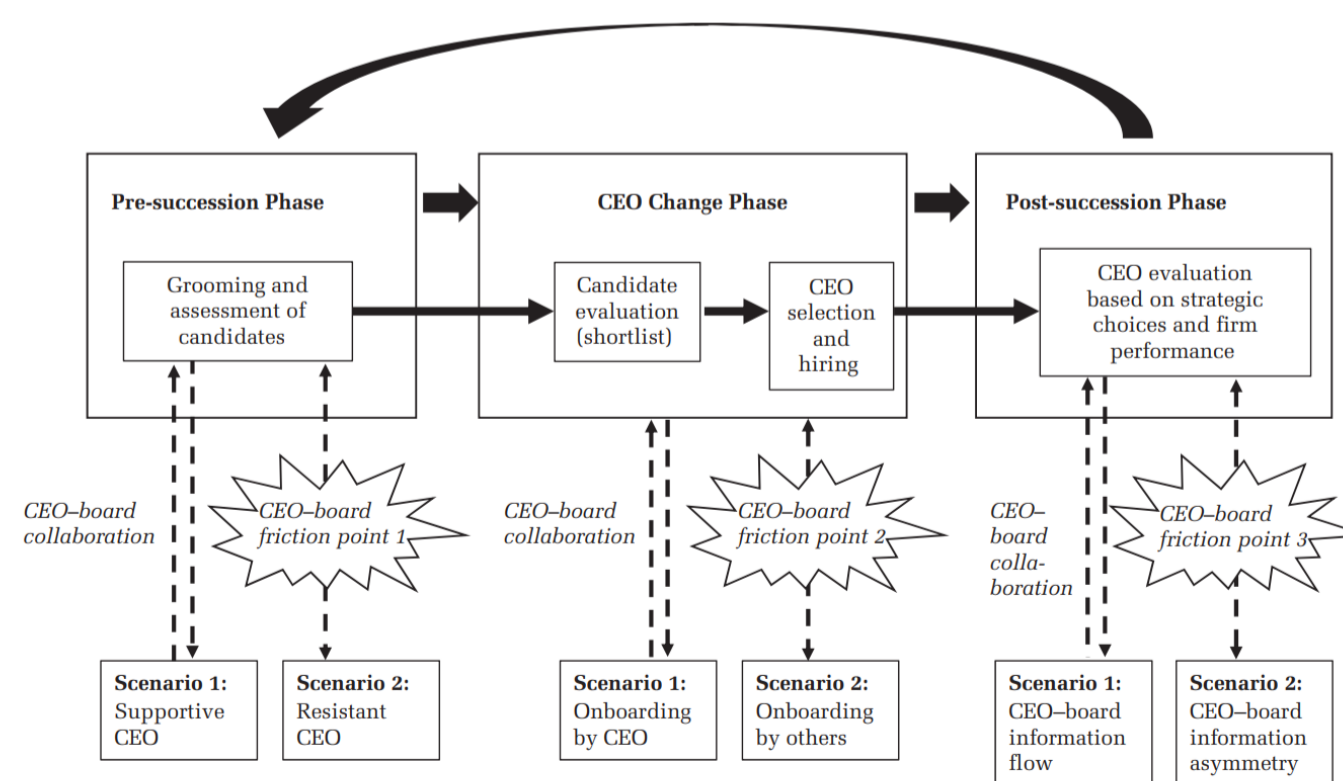
Model of Stereotyping Through Associated and Intersectional Categories (MOSAIC) (Hall et al., 2019)



The MOSAIC model helps in understanding how gender stereotypes can affect perceptions of women's fit with CEO roles, and how these stereotypes might shape the perceived suitability of women for leadership positions. This awareness helps in understanding how different categories, such as occupation (nursing) associate with gender to influence these perceptions. This MOSAIC model could shed light on how women's experiences during the onboarding process might be influenced by stereotypes related to their gender and other social categories.

Figure 2

CEO Succession as a Process (Berns & Klarner, 2017)



This model describes the processual nature of CEO succession planning using sequential phases. This figure is a visual representation of this process, highlighting each stage and the interactions between different stakeholders involved in the CEO succession process. This research aligns with the scholarly calls to examine the processual nature of CEO succession planning.

Preliminary Results

- 1.) Job role mandates strong communal behaviours
 - Building and upholding relationships
 - Repairing frivolving relationships and transforming toxic cultures
 - Related to research question one
- 2.) Several CEOs discussed the emphasis they placed on the alignment of personal and organizational values when considering whether to apply
 - Perhaps personal salience of person-organization fit is gendered?
- 3.) Experiences of gender discrimination (covert and/or overt) varied widely among participants
- 4.) Much discussion surrounding what characterizes functional/dysfunctional CEO-board relationships
 - The role of open discourse (vs. transparency), accountability, trustworthiness, and similar.

Contribution

- The study aspires to drive meaningful change, promote gender equity and equality in leadership, and enhance gender-inclusive leadership strategies, especially within the Ontario Hospital system. It also advances the scholarly discourse on women's leadership roles.
- The contribution will further research on senior women leaders' career ascension processes and offer valuable insights with practical implications for leadership and management. Particularly crucial is recognizing potential obstacles or facilitators affecting women's attainment of senior leadership roles, which could guide organizations in fostering gender-diverse internal talent pipelines.
- The present research answers scholarly calls to examine the processual nature of CEO succession planning, rather than CEO succession events.

Selected References

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