

Female Characteristics and Performance in Leadership: Impact of Irreconcilable Differences

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine the female characteristics and performance in leadership in view of the fact that some irreconcilable differences still exists. Women perform a wide variety of functions in life. Majority of them have risen as high as managers and directors both in public and private sectors. Female characteristics differ greatly from that of males. They include communal, compassionate, kind, sentimental, helpful and generous. These characteristics make women look too soft, tender and modesty and are unable to take tough decisions. This study aims at reviewing findings related with female characteristics and how it has affected their performance in leadership. In investigating this, a comprehensive questionnaire was designed and administered to the sample size of 240 staff members of some selected companies in Lagos state. The study was significantly a descriptive research design. Responses were generated from questions bothering on female characteristics and behavioural attitudes of males towards females in leadership positions. It was found that females have significantly improved their leadership rating by more or less adopting some of the male characteristics such as in decision making to enable them rise in the leadership.

Keywords: Employee performance, female characteristics, irreconcilable differences, leadership, stereotypes

INTRODUCTION

A somewhat more positive way of explaining the role and efficiency of women is by focusing on their performance in leadership positions. Grant (1988) noted that women have unique qualities that make them particularly well-suited as managers. They possess such qualities as affiliation and attachment, modesty and sensitivity. Female characteristics may be important for understanding the nature and role they perform in leadership positions. Women perform a wide variety of functions in life such as in domestic and organizational development. In addition to their reproductive roles they provide an important managerial and subordinate role in leadership. Women represent a significant percentage of the total labour force worldwide (Vinnicombie, 2000). Women have made great strides in entering management since 1970 with the overall proportion of women managers rising from 16 percent to 40 percent (Powell, 1990). The sudden rise in the number of female managers is significant (Ayman *et al*, 2009) while Yuki (2002) believed that it will bring a shift in thinking on effective leadership that women are more skilled at interpersonal relationships and are therefore superior managers in present society.

The accommodation of different leadership styles is an increasingly important issue for today's organizations. As women became a proportionately larger part of the workforce, one of the greatest challenges for American organizations will be to assimilate a more diverse labour force into higher level management roles (Morrison & Von Glinow, 1990). As a matter of fact measures to identify and characterize the role and performance of women in leadership position have linked this development to their empowerment. Training of women is an important source of empowerment. It enables them to draw on what is unique to their socialization as women and creating a different path to the top (Rosener, 1990).

United nations International Conference (1994) pointed out that the empowerment and autonomy of women and the improvement of their political, social, economic and health status are essential for the achievement of sustainable development and for the long term success of population programmes. In addition, more efforts are being made to consolidate this positive trend. Preko (2012) pointed that international institutions on women affairs have advocated for female right on many platforms, forum and seminars. As well, educational training programmes have been organized to recognize and welcome female managers in work places. If the empowerment trend continues and remains unabated for many years to come, the scope of female participation in leadership will be amazing.

The preparedness of women to accept a significant leadership role and devise means of improving on this opportunity as being created by the emerging labour market demand is more or less influenced by a whole complex of interrelationships regulated by both male and female characteristics such as willingness to innovate, self-assertiveness, risk preferences, desire for self-improvement, over confidence, trust and reciprocity, competitiveness and self-selection modesty, accommodation bargaining power and passivity.

According to the role congruity theory (Eagly, 1987) there is incongruence between the female gender role and the managerial role. The female stereotypes make them to exhibit such characteristics all warmth, modesty, accommodation, trust and reciprocity and sensitivity. These characteristics present women as they are in their sex role stereotypes. It makes them to be seen as warm, expressive and feminine and could be responsible for the lack of women in leadership positions (Denmark, 1977). The female sex role stereotypes label women as less competent and warmer emotionally than men. It does not accord them the privilege of attaining a leadership position such as manager which requires a

masculine stereotype of competence, toughness, and lacking in warmth (Bass, 1981).

In defining the influence of female stereotypes (characteristics) two views may be subscribed. One is to hold that women are generally aware of these stereotypes and choose to remain where nature has placed them the other is that in order to measure and attain high status like men they must behave like men. Hearn & Parkin (1986) explained that a female leader is frequently regarded as an aberration and women who become leaders are often offered the presumed accolade of being described as being like men. But whatever the beauties of male stereotypes may be in principle it must also be recognized that its implementation by women involves many difficulties and that the existing female stereotypes create more disadvantages for female managers and make them unable to perform well as good leaders.

Feminist characteristics are inconsistent with the stereotype that people have of leaders. Leaders are supposed to be strong; result oriented and will to take risks. Lack of these stereotypes endanger women opportunity in leadership and at the same time subject them to prejudicial evaluation of their competence as managers (Eagly and Carli, 2003) leading to a decreased access to leadership roles (Eagly & Karau, 2002) and more negative evaluations (Brescol *et al*, 2010). One fundamental in the measure of progression towards women empowerment has found out that it is neither realistic nor necessarily desirable to think of instantly transforming a traditional stereotype system that has prevailed for many generations into a new feminist sphere of rein.... such that will fling women to leadership position unaided. Attempts to introduce equal status indiscriminately have more often than not resulted in the status loss to women and a quick deepening of the irreconcilable differences.

These irreconcilable differences exist and can remain prolonged because of the influence of societal and traditional stereotypes. They are described as conditions that have been accepted by the society or

tradition to be against women upliftment. They exert a powerful influence and are at least partially to blame both for women's difficulty in attaining leadership positions and for society's struggle to accept them (Moran, 1992). These stereotypes tend to be reflected in evaluations and promotions and place women at a disadvantage for advancement (Eagly & Carau, 2001). An example of irreconcilable difference is any form of stereotype that inhibits the growth and development of women in the society.

Moran (1992) described all forms of stereotypes against women as glass ceiling. It is an almost invisible barrier that prevents ambitious women from moving up in the organizational hierarchy. As explained by Rivers (1991) the glass ceiling effect is a real one and not just a figment of feminist imagination. It has been in existence since the "countermovement era" of the early twentieth century. Note that a countermovement is a conservative movement that opposed social change. It was based in conflict over status and life style while others argue that it was a class conflict. The objective of this movement was to keep women in home-based sphere that was distinct from the nasty, duty, vulgar male world of politics (Mashall, 1986). Thus irreconcilable differences predate this era and have been responsible for slow rise of women to leadership positions despite some recent legal and constitutional provisions such as affirmative action (Moran, 1992). Furthermore it is misleading to believe that the rising rate of women to higher levels in leadership brought about by social and political campaigns is befitting and rely on that to welcome the idea that it is difficult to identify the influence of irreconcilable differences which over the years have trailed their historical process.

Naturally, the roles of women are the same with little difference across borders. In Nigeria, there is a growing concern that sufficient action has not been taken to promote the well-being of women, let alone their leadership position. The same level of irreconcilable differences which

affect women globally affect an average women in this country. Todaro (2000) observed that another factor that needs more careful consideration in the design of environmental policy is the important role of women in the management of resources. Through their roles as managers of fuel and water supplies, agricultural producers and guardians of household health, women control the fate of many of the world's resources. Yet they are rarely consulted in the design of government services or have access to extension programme. Women in the third world, who commonly work 60 to 90 hours a week, will have little or no use for resources unless they are made easily accessible. This is a clear evidence of irreconcilable difference. It presents women as token and male as dominant.

A clear-cut understanding of the extent of influence of irreconcilable differences on women upliftment leadership position may assist in affecting changes in the proportion of women in organizations as well as changes in thinking about effective leadership (Yuki, 2002) and it could affect both gender stereotypes (i.e. what makes a good women) and managerial stereotypes i.e. what makes a good manager (Eagly and Sczesny, 2009). In the end, it is the organizational development and growth rather than gender stereotypes that matter and it is pertinent that both sides must account for this balance.

In this study, we take note that dramatic changes have taken place in women since the last decade and this could be responsible for their upgrading to leadership positions. Owing to efficiency costs and output effects, employers strictly demand for different leadership characteristics for females and males. This study focuses on the key gender characteristics that can satisfy these preferences. These include gender of the employee (i.e. male or female), the gender characteristics required by the position (i.e. managerial) and the organizational management gender ratio (Duer and Bono, 2006; Schein, 2001); Sczesny *et al* 2004; Vecchio & Boatwright, 2002). Consideration of the male characteristics

only such as has been the traditional approach leaves us with a biased picture. Therefore with regard to effects on leadership performance gender of the employee and leadership position is more vital than the management ratio (Staker *et al.*, 2011) and how their analysis can assist to determine the performance of females is also important for this study.

Statement of the Problem

In our attempt to explain the how participation of women in leadership positions this study seeks to examine the possible influence of irreconcilable on women upliftment and performance in leadership positions. Gender characteristics consist of male and female characteristics. It has the potential to influence the behaviour and attitudes of each group as well as their performance in leadership positions. Female characteristics (stereotypes) play significant part on their work roles and models in leadership effectiveness (Ayehr & Beno, 2006). Male and female characteristics differ largely due to their nature. Male characteristics are described as argentic characteristics which consist of assertiveness, dominant, confident tendency, aggressiveness, ambitious, independent and self-confident. On the other hand, female characteristics are regarded as communal characteristics which are concerned with the welfare of other people inducing traits such as compassionate, kind, sentimental, helpful and generous. These characteristics make women look too soft, tender and modesty and are unable to take tough decisions. This can be responsible for the slow progression of women into leadership position (Moran, 1992).

Women who want to aspire to high level in leadership, as often been observed must first possess the potential to develop argentic characteristics described as traditional leadership traits commonly associated with males (Eagly, 1987; Eagly & Karau, 2002). Some women have become leaders and instead of bringing a softer approach based on their nature as women they have demonstrated tougher, competitive and assertive characteristics and in some cases trying to be more male than

males (Hearn & Parkin, 1986). Though seemingly appreciated it has never lasted airing to the same natural characteristics of women.

Furthermore, it is idle to pretend that all the female folks must first adopt the male stereotypes before they can be allowed to climb to the top ladder in the organization. There are of course some notable differences where women have attained the highest height without aligning to male characteristics. This condition entails drawing to what is unique to their socialization as women and creating a different path to the top. In investigating this proposition there is the need to close the gender characteristics gap affecting female leadership position by evolving a new and them to prejudicial evaluation of their competence middle stereotype that is favourably disposed to females.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to investigate the extent to which the performances of females in the leadership positions are constrained by their gender characteristics. Other objectives include:

- To determine the influence of male characteristics on women upliftment and performance in leadership positions.
- To examine the impact of female stereotypes on their ability to perform better in leadership position.
- To identify unique female characteristics that is effective in winning the support of male subordinates.
- To examine the intertemporal relationship between managerial stereotypes and female stereotypes.

Finally, it will assist in developing a general and acceptable stereotype for employee's characteristics and managerial stereotypes.

Significance of the Study

The study on female characteristics and performance in leadership position is focused on the assumption that women participation in leadership position will create new methods of working together and

that morale and productivity will increase. In the rapidly changing global business world it is difficult to keep track of competitors and their particular strengths therefore a study on the role and performance of females in the leadership position will assist the organizations to strengthen its human resources function. It is worth remembering that a study of this type will enhance the research requirements of academicians, enhance the volume and reference points of future writes and as well be immensely relevant to business organizations in the area of management gender ratio.

Research Questions

The following questions were designed for this study.

1. How effectively have women performed in their leadership role.
2. Is there any significant difference between female and male stereotypes?
3. How has female stereotypes influenced their choice as managers in an organization?
4. Are women averse to their gender differences?
5. Are women aware of the challenges imposed by leadership characteristics?
6. Do woman need male stereotypes to attain high status in an organization?
7. Do women and men who aspire to high offices reject conditions prescribed by stereotypes?
8. Is the ignorance of the managerial stereotypes a prediction of the existence of a functional separate female serotypes for a successful female leadership position in the organization?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The performance of women in leadership position has not been appreciated over the years due to some perceived unsavoury characteristics associated with their gender. Their performances have been held back by the same old tradition and perception. Based on some

studies conducted on students it was found that good leadership was always associated with masculine characteristics and they believed that female traits were irrelevant or even harmful for good leadership (Powell et al, 2002). In the past, leadership opportunities for women tended to be limited to all female organizations such as securities, convents and female institutions but even there the presidents of women's colleges were almost always men (Bass, 1981).

Women in leadership position have always been looked as an aberration. A female leader is frequently regarded as an aberration and women who become leaders are often offered the presumed accolade of being described as being like men (Hearn & Frankin 1986-87). The immense psychological impact of this growing discontent is difficult to estimate. It led to a feeling that women's position in leadership is hopeless that they have been beaten not only by their male counterpart but also by their own women folk and to catch up with men there should be a crossing to the efficiency of performance.

This tide of dissatisfaction –euphoria a gaining the freedom of operation became widespread especially after the United Nations International Conference on women held in Beijing, China (Todaro, 2000). In that conference it was discussed that women capital is perhaps the most important prerequisite for growth, education and enhanced economic status for women are critical to meeting long-term development objectives. In spite of all these the role of women in leadership continues to diminish. It is also pathetic to learn that there is discouraging decline in the number of companies with female executive directors and a decline in the number of bounds with multiple women directors (Sealy et al, 2004).

A major cause of this misgiving can be located in the role congruity theory (Eagly, 1998) which states that there is incongruence between the female gender role and the manager role due to their natural

characteristics, like warmth, modesty, and sensitivity. These expectations caused disadvantages for female managers, because they are inconsistent with the stereotypes that people have of leaders. This is confirmed by the fact that effective leaders are supposed to be strong, result-oriented and willing to take risks. Consequently, women face prejudicial evaluation of their competence as managers (Eagly & Carli, 2003), leading to a decreased access to leadership roles (Eagly & Karau, 2002) and can as well pose mere negative evaluations (Brescoll *et al*, 2010). Furthermore, it is regrettably to say that a relatively large proposition of the work performed by women is unremunerated (Todaro, 2000).

The unprecedented flare up in this negative direction may be traceable to the existence of gender stereotypes otherwise defined as categorical beliefs regarding the traits and behavioural characteristics ascribed to individuals on the basis of their gender. They serve as expectations about the attitudes and behaviours of individual group members (Cleveland, Stockdale & Murphy, 2000). These stereotypes still exert a powerful influence and are at least partially to blame both for women's difficulty in attaining leadership positions and societies struggle to accept them (Moran, 1992). Stereotypes are considered as one of the direct antecedent's of discrimination at work (Dovido and Hebl, 2005).

Impact of Female Stereotypes on Performance

Female stereotypes are regarded for their poor performance. Women ascribe their power not to their position within the organization but to their own personal characteristics (Moran, 1992). Their inability to perform and occupy vital position in leadership is due to their inability to mobilize their subordinates. Feminine characteristics are regarded as communal stereotypes while that of males are called argentic stereotypes. The communal characteristic are concerned with welfare of other people such as compassionate, kind, sentimental, helpful,

generous, modesty while argentic characteristics are explained as aggressive, ambitious, independent and self-confident.

In the words of Eagly (1987), Eagly & Karau (2002) argentic characteristics have traditionally been associated with leadership roles. Attitudes of males towards females have also contributed to poor performance of women. These attitudes have created an environment where male subordinates do not effectively adhere to instructions emanating from female managers at work places. There are situations where the male subordinates might politely turn down the instructions from their female heads.

In the views of Herbert and Yost (1978) attitudes have powerful influences on the behaviour of people at work. It can increase or decrease their performance. Generally women are highly sensitive about attitudes and can react or act according to the intention of the attitude. Women are sensitive to attitudes and remarks that do not accord dignity to their persons and this could slow down their performance.

In Nigeria, a sizeable proportion of women population is namely, native and not too educated. Few of them that are occupying high position in leadership and are seen to be performing well borrow the attributes of males (Adeyemi-Bello & Tomkiewicz, 1996) in a study conducted in the South western Nigeria to determine gender attitudes toward women managers. Most of the respondents were potential future business managers (i.e. college students majoring in business). The study disclosed that Nigerian women have more positive attitudes toward female managers from their male counterparts (Preko, 2012). The implication is this different attitude still affects the performance of women in leadership positions.

Influence of male stereotypes on women performance

The incidence of stereotypes has persistently remained in irreconcilable difference in the search for women participation in leadership some women have broken the constraints and are now copying the male characteristics all in attempts to achieve greatness. Hearn & Parkin (1986-87) commented that some women have become leaders and instead of bringing a "softer" approach based on supposedly inherent female characteristics of submissiveness, passivity and caring have demonstrated that women can be competitive and assertive in some cases trying to be more "male" than the males.

In his view; Powell et al (2002) posited that cognitive scheme or stereotype for a manager is composed of masculine traits ("think manager- think masculine" stereotype). This scheme appears to be more masculine among boys and men than among girls and women (Ayman-Nolley and Ayman, 2005). Raising the question is to point to the answer that women at the higher levels of management have been found to be wearing male clothes and skins so that they can operate in a male world. Therefore for women to excel in leadership they should be identified with characteristics ascribe to males and often times may be seen to like males more than female counterparts.

However, females in leadership position do not nauseate females and like males for them to ascend. What happens is that they admire both female and masculine stereotypes and can affect their stereotypes to suit the leadership stereotypes (Tausch & Hewstone, 2010). Again in Nigeria, women have adopted more of the males' stereotypes in order to remain on top. More evidences abound in ministry works, evangelization where women have to mobilize large audience and listeners by exerting great energy and ability like men in the distributive trade females have also been identifies with convincing outlooks and persuasive remarks and allurements in order to attract more customers.

Women in high offices both in private and public establishments exhibit male traits. Some are accused of nagging, shouting and giving orders like males in order to get task accomplished. Yuki (2002) believes that changes in the proportion of women in organizations as well as changes in thinking about effective leadership could affect both gender stereotypes (i.e. what makes a good woman) and managerial stereotypes (i.e. what makes a good manager) (Eagly and Sczesny, 2009). As the distribution of men and women into social roles shifts, perceptions of the characteristics of men and women should also change. However change cannot be expected to occur quickly (Lueptow *et al*, 2001).

Amending the Irreconcilable Differences

Women have a host of problems to be solved if they have to succeed. Gender differences that are against women have contrived to assume negative dimensions irrespective of the new changes. Some legal measures such as affirmative action have failed to obviate the negative impact of female stereotypes. Some traditional and cultural biases continue to affect women quality. These stereotypes still exert a powerful influence and are at least partially to blame both for women's difficulty in attaining leadership positions and for society's struggle to accept them (Moran, 1992).

Irreconcilable differences are anti-feminist and have been in existence since ages. Denmark (1977) revealed that sex role stereotypes accounted for the lack of women in leadership positions studies conducted on sex role stereotypes in 1960s and 1970s confirmed that men were seen to competent and women found to be warm and expressive. Males and females were seen as opposites. Males were expected to be masculine and females found to be females and anyone found in the middle was considered and adjusted or in need of help (Powell & Butterfield, 1989). It is quite unfortunate that every manager is described as masculine despite the growing number of women managers in the country. Historical roles and antecedents of women are in conflict with women

roles in leadership. It presents a substantial bias against women and a major problem for those trying to function as leaders in organizations (Bass, 1981).

Negative perceptions about female characteristics tend to affect the overall performances of the organization. As women are being sidelined due to their characteristics the attitudinal gap keeps on widening and it can affect the chances of women getting into positions of leadership. Positive perceptions about women participation in leadership tends to bring about greater and effective team, work, better sales results, more satisfied customers, high job satisfaction, increased harmony, lower stress and reduced increased harmony, lower stress and reduced sexual harassment problems (Beka, 2012). It is important to highlight that no real competition is possible between males and females until most of characteristics that distinguish each from the other is removed or minimised.

Research Methods

A descriptive research design was adopted for this study. It allows the study to be conducted in a manner that describes the specific research characteristics that were included in the research framework. A survey was administered in a selected sample from a specific population identified by the study. The survey was applied to obtain data from members of staff of the organizations about their views about female characteristics. The population comprises the staff members of some selected companies in the oil and gas industry, banking and food and beverages. They are 1290 of all the employees of Chevron petroleum, Guarantee Trust Bank, First Bank, Cadbury and Nestle. A total sample of 240 staff members was chosen using a stratified sampling technique. The data analysis was conducted using the SPSS. There was no discrimination in the distribution of the questionnaires. Both males and females are targeted in the distribution. The questionnaire was designed to track all relevant research data. Information that was not

needed was excluded. Respondents were allowed to react to questions bordering on female characteristics and its influence on female leadership.

Data Analysis

The data analysis was conducted in two different patterns using simple percentage of "Yes or No" strongly disagreed (1) and strongly agreed (5) and ruled according to the Likert five scale rating. Pearson Correlation Coefficient was used to determine the statistical relationship between variables applied in the analysis. Variables such as male stereotypes and managerial stereotypes, female stereotypes and managerial stereotypes were analysed to determine how they affect each other in the study. A research hypothesis will be accepted if the result outcome had a positive correlation efficient and will be rejected if it has negative correlation coefficient.

Objective of the analysis: To assess whether the female characteristics can affect their performance in leadership position.

Table 1.0: To determine the ability of the female managers to influence the attitude of male subordinates

Attitudes	Column 1	Column 2	Column 3
Statements	Response	Count	Percent (%)
Female managers have the necessary managerial ability to influence the attitude of their male subordinates	Yes	100	41.67
	No	120	50.0
	Indifferent	20	8.33
	Total	240	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2016

Table 1 above reveals that 100(41.67%) of respondents were of the view that female managers have the necessary managerial ability to influence

the attitude of their male subordinates, 120(50.0%) said No while 20(8.33%) were indifferent. This infers that female managers have the essential managerial ability to influence the attitude of their male subordinates.

Objective of the analysis: To assess whether the female managers are averse to male stereotypes.

Table 2.0: To determine whether there is any significant difference between employees stereotypes and managerial stereotypes

Attitudes	Column 1	Column 2	Column 3
Statements	Response	Count	Percent (%)
Managerial stereotypes do not predict the selection and recruitment of a gender	Yes	150	62.50
	No	80	33.33
	Indifferent	10	4.17
	Total	240	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2016

Table 2 shows that 150(62.50%) of respondents were of the opinion that managerial stereotypes do not predict the selection and recruitment of a gender, 80(33.3%) said No while 10(4.17%) were indifferent with the statement. Thus, this implies that a higher percentage of the employees were of the opinion that managerial stereotypes do not envisage the selection and recruitment of a gender at workplace.

Objective of the Analysis: To investigate whether there is stereotypical difference in the achievement of task-oriented and people-oriented behaviour objectives of the organisation.

Table 3.0: To determine if there is significant difference in performance by either the male or female gender in the areas of task oriented behaviour and people oriented behaviour

Attitudes	Column 1	Column 2	Column 3
Statements	Response	Count	Percent (%)
There is no different perception about the way task-oriented and people-oriented behaviours are being carried out by the genders	Yes	120	50.00
	No	70	29.17
	Indifferent	50	20.83
	Total	240	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2016

Table 3 shows that 120(50.0%) of respondents were of the opinion that there is no different perception about the way task-oriented and people-oriented behaviours are being carried out by the genders, 70(29.17%) said No while 50(20.83%) were indifferent with the statement. Therefore, this infers that a higher percentage of the respondents were of the opinion that there is no different observation about the way task-oriented and people-oriented behaviours are being carried out by the genders.

Objective of the analysis: To investigate the possibility of developing functional separate female stereotypes for successful managerial position

Table 4.0: To examine the relevance of gender stereotypes that is unique for women performance in leadership

Attitudes	Column 1	Column 2	Column 3
Statements	Response	Count	Percent (%)
Gender characteristics that are unique to female do not satisfy the managerial stereotypes	Yes	100	41.67
	No	130	54.17
	Indifferent	10	4.16
	Total	240	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2016

Table 4 reveals that 100(41.67%) of respondents were of the opinion that gender characteristics that are unique to female do not satisfy the managerial stereotypes, 130(54.17%) said No while 10(4.16%) were indifferent with the statement. Therefore, this infers that a higher percentage of the employees were of the view that gender characteristics that are unique to female satisfy the managerial stereotypes.

Objective of the analysis: To investigate the risk perception and ability to tolerate risk by female managers

Table 5.0: To examine the risk preferences of female managers

Attitudes	Column 1	Column 2	Column 3
Statements	Response	Count	Percent (%)
Do female managers show preference for risk	Yes	60	25.00
	No	130	54.17
	Indifferent	50	20.83
	Total	240	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2016

Table 5 reveal that 60(25.0%) of respondents were of the opinion that female managers do show preference for risk, 130(54.17%) said No while 50(20.83%) were indifferent with the statement. Therefore, this infers that a higher percentage of the employees were of the view that female managers do not show preference for risk.

DISCUSSION

This study provides a variety of situations where the issue of female characteristics was examined to determine its influence on their managerial competence. We began by taking a bird's eye view of the relevant historical role of women in leadership (Powell, 1990). Some of the key variables considered in the study such as the ability of the female

managers to influence the attitude of their male subordinates revealed that a total of fifty percent (50%) of the respondents did not agree that women have the potential to influence positively the attitudes of their subordinates while 41.67% agree and 8.33% remained indifferent. The majority opinion on this analysis was supported by Eagly & Karau (2002). Women lack the leadership characteristics to mobilize support from subordinates and therefore cannot develop a powerful influence on the behaviour of people (subordinates) at workplaces (Herbert & Yost, 1978).

On the issue of significant difference between employees stereotypes and managerial stereotypes a total of 62.5 percent of the respondents did agree that significant difference exists while 33.33 percent disagreed and 4.17 chose to remain indifferent. Differences in the gender of the employee and gender of the manager are aimed at identify the gender characteristics required by the organization (Duer and Beno, 2006; Schein 2001; Sczesny et al, 2004; Vecchio & Boat Wright 2002). The evidence derived from a comparison of these two gender characteristics would be helpful since with this investigation the organization would no longer rely only on the traditional male stereotypes.

The relative levels of performance of either the males or females were also examined based on the task-oriented behaviour and people oriented behaviour. The study tried to examine this stereotypical difference in the achievement of this objective. A total of 50 percent of the respondents agreed that a significant difference exist between the way the tow genres, male and female can accomplish these tasks while 29.17 percent did not agree that there was any difference and 20.83 percent remained indifferent. The difference that exists between these two genders thus brings to light again the need to reduce gender difference by information disconfirmation (Tausch & Hewstone, 2010).

An empirical measure of shifting in thinking and perception was examined. This was done to develop a unique stereotype for women for their quest for leadership position. This analysis tries to isolate the effects of female gender stereotypes that are not tolerated by managerial stereotypes. A total of 41.67 percent of the respondents agree that there were some female characteristics that are not tolerated by managerial stereotypes while 54.17 percent did not agree and 4.16 percent remained indifferent. For the majority (54.17%) of the respondents that did not agree, they believed that women possess all the stereotypes that a manager requires and therefore do not require any other characteristics. Women should be encouraged to participate actively in leadership irrespective of negative stereotypes because their participation will bring better results to the organization (Becka, 2012).

Finally on the issue of risk perception, a total of 54.17 percent of the respondents did not agree that women show sufficient level of risk aversion while 25 percent agreed that women show sufficient risk aversion and 20.83 percent remained indifferent. The outcome of this analysis actually confirmed the fact that women to a large extent possess the managerial stereotypes.

CONCLUSION

Gender differences present formidable difficulties against female upliftment to leadership position in the organization. Women have been viewed to possess characteristics that are less attractive to leadership (Stoker, 2011). This generalization may have been informed by the perception of the forces that are opposed to gender equality. A wide range of publications in this issue have over the years been placed on the drawing board of human resources expert. Some of them are explosively in favour of masculine stereotypes while others are characterized by dampened reference of management gender ratio.

Any argument in favour of male or female stereotypes tends to create dangerous trend because no organization operates with only one gender. There is no automatic mechanism by which gender balance can be maintained. The avoidable option has been either to upgrade the female stereotypes to meet up with the managerial stereotypes (Morrison & Von Glinow, 1990).

It is interesting to note that leaders are described with such objectives as competitive, aggressive or dominant which are commonly associated with masculine so far a female to achieve the feat of a leader she must act and behave like a male (Hearn & Parkin, 1986-87).

RECOMMENDATIONS

It does not take a close observation of the gender differences to conclude that female characteristics are not tolerated in highly competitive positions. What prevails now is a prediction that masculine preference is not only affecting the females but the males as well. Women are continuously climbing the hierarchical ladder in the innovative organizational structures thus building a new web described as web of incision in utter isolation of hierarchies of exclusion (Helgensen, 1990). Therefore it is recommended that gender role awareness should be encouraged to encourage the role of women in leadership (Roberson & Kulik, 2007). Religious organizations, not work outfits and civil society and gender programmes should be embarked upon to improve the position of women, reduce male stereotype psychology and inferiority complex.

Finally, let the issue of gender differences continues to change the psyche of the female folks. The problem is obviously a complex one in both conceptual and empirical terms. Therefore there is the need for more global support of female empowerment and support for more leadership role in business organizations globally.

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