

The Underrepresentation of Women in Top Management: Our Perceptions

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Abstract

Gender, a socio-cultural construct may still be affecting the positioning of women in the formal sector. This paper investigates the perceived impact of the underrepresentation of women in top management among Ghanaians and the readiness of organizations to accept women for top management positions with the view of optimizing the use of female workforce at all levels. Data were obtained through the administration of questionnaires to two hundred and sixty employees drawn from public sector establishments. The composition is made up of males and females of managerial and supervisory ranks. One hundred and seventy useable questionnaires were retrieved and analyzed. Results indicate a strong unwillingness of organizations to fill top management positions with women despite the conviction that success in management does not depend on an individual's gender and the profession that women in management are as effective as their male counterparts. Respondents do not also think the near absence of women in top management has any negative impact on organizations and the economy at large.

Key Words: Underrepresentation, Women in Top management, Occupational role segregation, Ghana

1. Introduction

Though the number of women entering all forms of paid employment including those that are regarded as the male preserves, for example, Technology, Engineering, Construction, Law Enforcement and Security Services keep on increasing, relatively very few reach management positions, especially top management positions (Afedo et al. 2013; Hoobler et al. 2011; Grant Thornton International Business Report (IBR) 2013, 2012; Acker 2006; Wirth 2002; Kurtosi 2008; Kang & Rowley 2005; Australian Institute of Management, (AIM) 2012). Women who enter paid employment are expected to work in occupations and positions tagged feminine, (Schein 2007; O'Sullivan & Sheridan 1999). These professions include secretarial, teaching, nursing, tailoring, catering, public relations to mention but a few and even in these so called feminized occupations women are mainly clustered at the lower levels of the organizational ladder, (Hoobler et al. 2011; Wirth 2002; Schein 2007; Asamoah-Dabri 2008). The gender roles thus result in both lateral and vertical occupational segregation in the labour market. Unlike males, women are found in less prestigious and powerful professions and positions, (Holst 2005; Schein 2007; Gupta et al.1998; Wirth 2002; Asamoah-Dabri 2008).

Finding women in paid employment is a shift from the norm and more especially finding them in top management is unfeminine, (Bishop Sarpong 1974; Kottis 1996; Noe 1988; Schwartz 1989). It is normal for a woman not to go to school and to drop out of school, (ISSER/ DPP 1998) and it is equally normal for women to play subservient roles. Like Yarguah (2008), Asamoah-Dabri (2008) opines, "the construction of masculinity and femininity makes it normal for women to be found in positions and jobs which reflect their traditional roles rather than managerial positions that are strongly connected to masculinity". But today many women are becoming breadwinners and family heads (Wirth 2002; Human Development Department OSHD, 2008; Amu, 2005). Naturally, women are more likely to become single parents than males, unlike males who could deny responsibility for pregnancy, women definitely cannot do so. Again unlike males who could easily part with their children as a result of spousal separation, these children are often left in the custody of women to fend for. In Ghana, it is estimated that one third of households are headed by women, Human Development Department (OSHD), (2008), while the platform of action, Beijing cited in Wirth (2002) established, one fourth of all households worldwide are headed by women and many other households are dependent on female income even where men are present. This suggests a reverse of the status quo where men are to provide the needs and protection for women and children, the very reasons for which men are to work in paid employment and accorded the status of headship, (Dako-Gyeke, & Owusu, 2013).

However, statistics shows that the number of women in top management is still overwhelmingly low. One would expect that the representation of women in top management positions would improve significantly with changes in the management front (Nickles et al. 2002) where the soft management skills are gaining currency, the increasing number of women entering the formal sector accompanied with changes in technology which have brought in its

wake 'teleworking', globalization of the market and the proven record of women managers performance and the changing status of women as bread-winners but the opposite is true. Women still constitute a minute fraction of top managers, (Allah-Mensah 2005; Wirth 2002; Nesbit & Seeger 2007).

Grant Thornton IBR (2013) reveals that women hold only 24% senior management positions globally. This figure has not been stable neither has it enjoyed steady growth. In 2004, it was 19%. It rose in 2007 to 24%. It maintained this rate in 2009 and then dropped to 20% in 2011 and made one percent gain putting the figure at 21% in 2012 and rose to 24% in 2013. Few regional differences, however, exist. Mainland China for example has as high as 51%, Poland 48% and the Baltic 40% females in senior management positions while Japan has as low as 7%. This is not surprising since Japan practices the two track system of recruitment where women with comparable qualifications as their male counterparts are perpetually appointed as supporting staff to males. Others include UAE and Netherlands with 11% each. The Sticky floor syndrome, (a discriminatory employment pattern that keeps a certain group of people at the bottom of the job scale) is highly perpetuated in some countries (ILO 2004). Reiterating this point Benneh (2001) who conducted a study on women in the financial sector in Ghana has discovered and states as follows:

...in Barclays Bank, and until recently, Ecobank and in many financial institutions, the heads of Human Resources Departments are all women. With such women, even though they are highly qualified with second degrees, etc. the possibility of becoming the chief executives of banks is slim simply because they are regarded as supportive staff. The banks are not often prepared to groom such women to become Heads of the institutions, (Benneh, 2001, p.63)

In Ghana out of 64 members of six public boards only 13 which form 20% are females with the Lands Commission not having any female on its board (Allah-Mensah 2005). In the present regime out of the ten regional ministers only one is a female and out of 25 cabinet ministers only 7 are females and out of the 25 members of council of state only 3 are females. These 3 females are appointed and not elected.

A gross mismatch exists between the percentages of women in the work force as against their representation in top management. Fagbemi (1996) discloses that in 1993 out of 9,911 Senior Civil Servant in the Ghanaian Civil Service only 2,474 constituting 25% were females and for the same period out of 66 Directors, only 6, that is, 9% were females. According to Ghana's 2000 population census figures, while 8.3% of the employed males are in the administrative and management class only 4.8% of female employees get to that position yet women form more than 52% of the population of Ghana.

The male dominance at the top management positions was equally pronounce in professions that are regarded as the female preserves, and where women dominate the workforce, (Wirth, 2002; Kang & Rowley, 2005; Lane 1998; Asamoah-Dabri, 2008; Ofei-Aboagye, 1996). Kang & Rowley, (2005) reveal the following figures pertaining in some stereotyped feminized organizations in South Korea: In Telecommunication, while women in management formed 8.7%, men formed 91.3%; in Health and Social, while women formed work 19.5% men filled 80.5% of the management positions. In wholesale/retail sector, where women in management formed 9.8% men made up 90.2% and in Education while women held 21.2% share of the management positions men had 78.8% share of it. Lane, (1998); Secombe & Patch, cited in Lane (1998) disclose that though women dominate the nursing profession - 93.6%; and 90.0 per cent, respectively, they are clustered at the lower grades of the organizational hierarchy, while men disproportionately hold more management posts relative to their overall numbers.

The study therefore aims at investigating the perception of Ghanaians about women top managers' performance and the impact of their underrepresentation in top management positions on organizations and on the economy at large.

2. Literature Review

2.1 The Social Role Theory

The social role theory, (1987) is a multi-dimensional concept. It is in the first place rooted in the division of labour between women and men thus resulting in occupational role segregation between males and females. The second is the structural perspective that emphasized expected behavioural patterns based on gender assigned roles, where agentic and communal characteristics are associated with the male and female respectively, (Dulin, 2007). A third perspective sometimes referred to as the critical role theory is a social criticism that holds that institutionalized oppression of groups of people in society, be it cultural, ethnic, racial, gender, age, groups is often supported by the oppressed people themselves with the belief that it is for their own good. While the fourth identified as the diffused status characteristics holds that expectations towards group members are formed on the basis of their previous performance and their diffused status characteristics such as a general rule people tend to have more social status, for example, if they are male than female (Carli & Eagly 1999).

The social role theory, from the division of labour perspective, determines male and female roles in society. Males are assigned the breadwinner role and are to work normally outside the home, earn wages and salaries from their labour, and acquire the necessary wealth to cater for their households while women are assigned the homemaker role, which is completely a voluntary labour. Women by African and especially Ghanaian tradition are required to get married and make babies. The questions often asked are, 'Is she not married, ah, is she not old?' The questioners go ahead to conclude, 'she is old enough to get married, she is getting late,' without awaiting the response from the individual they are addressing. As Gyekye (1996) puts it, an unmarried woman is almost an anomaly. She is thus required to work in the home, full time, make babies, care for them, attend to their husbands, the sick and the aged and perform all household chores. Women who therefore work outside the home for wages and salaries are seen as deviants, Feugen et al. cited in Ismail & Ibrahim (2008). To a large extent these gender roles - the breadwinner and homemaker roles, are products of social conditioning and lack any essential or biological reality, but the sexes generally get stuck to them and often a shift from them becomes problematic, (Bishop Sarpong 1974).

2.2. *Gender Role Stereotyping Implications for Women*

Stereotyping involves attributing peculiar characteristics to groups of individuals, on the bases of race, sex, age and what have you. Stereotyping, from whatever angle one wants to look at it is a limiting factor. It closes one's eyes to emerging positive and negative consequences and could induce complacency or inaction. Gender role stereotyping thus constitutes a serious obstacle to women's ability to advance to management positions, (Afedo et al. 2013; Koenig et al. 2011; Asamoah-Dabri 2008; Yarquah, 2008). The general position is that women, like children, are inferior to men and must be led and not the other way round. Alfred Lord Tennyson's poem, "Man for the field and woman for the hearth: Man for the sword and for the needle she: Man with the head and woman with the heart: Man to command and woman to obey; All else confusion." Written as far back as the 1800s, that stereotyped the role of women and men (Reskin & Padavic 1994) still illustrates several contemporary sex role stereotypes about status of men and women even at the workplaces today. Society continues to maintain its cultural heritage in the face of innovation and modernity (Gyekye 1996). According to Singh & Agrawal 2007, "Stereotypes of gender roles created by a culture govern our way of life throughout our existence". Asamoah-Dabri (2008) in her study of the Health Service in Ghana attributes the absence of women in senior management positions within the Ghana Health Service to the "conviction of Ghanaians that, women are expected to be in the house and be available for the family at all times". Yarguah, (2008), acknowledges the use of sexual differences in justifying a male dominated society in which, women have been given inferior or secondary roles in their working lives, noting, "It is undeniable revulsion that the woman, right from birth has seen herself counted among the low esteemed in the traditions of society", while quickly acknowledging regional differences. According to Assimeng, (1990 p.58) "in Africa, various myths, taboos, customs and traditions had historically assigned the woman to a ritually (and therefore, socio-politically) inferior status". The inflexibility of the division of labour based on sex, age and status has been emphasized by Bishop Sarpong (1974) in the words: "if a member of one sex neglects custom and tries to adopt the habit of the other sex, feelings of ridicule, anger, and even religious emotions may be aroused". Even today, a man who lends a helping hand at home (performs some household chores), and especially moves into the wife's apartment to live with her is no longer regarded a real man. He is a "woman-man", and is often mocked and nick-named "Salome" ("Salome", is generally accepted as a female name at least in Ghana) in some parts of the Ewe land in the country.

2.3 *Gender in Recruitment and Promotion of Females*

Tradition or culture has assigned females inferior roles and placed men in decision-making positions and it is an undeniable fact that cultural norms, values and beliefs for example, headship of families entrusted to men has spilled over into the formal work environment, the corporate sector. As such males have dominated all leadership and top management positions both in male and female preserved organizations, (Wirth 2002; Kang & Rowley 2005; Asamoah-Dabri 2008; Allah-Mensah 2005 & Ofei-Aboagye, 1996).

The Ghanaian situation has been vividly described by Benneh (2001) & Allah-Mensah, (2005) in the following expositions respectively:

Women are expected to be supervised by men, and this has influence on Human Resources Development policies, especially in the areas of recruitment and promotion policies (Benneh 2001 p.61).

...a few of the men who are insubordinate because they do not want to take instructions from women because of their gender ... the women they are expected to work with, (Allah-Mensah 2005 p.75)

Kotis (1996) study with reference to Greece claims,

"several senior managers by believing so strongly in women's traditional role and in older gender

stereotypes, most often reinforce them within their firms” (p.34)
Discriminatory practices are mainly hidden in the perceptions, values and beliefs about women’s roles and capabilities. These are usually the things that are really difficult to expunge from corporate policies since these are unseen and unwritten policies, the real glass ceiling. The researcher recalls a situation where a male professor asked her, if it is discriminatory for an employer to reject a properly qualified woman applicant promotion to top management position on the basis of such an applicant having a baby who needs her attention. The professor did not see it as discriminatory or wrong because the employer needs someone who can do the work effectively and efficiently and assumes a woman with a baby cannot measure up to that standard. This brings to light the theory of unconscious bias which “rests on the idea that individuals necessarily develop an embedded, unconscious belief and response system about the world they inhabit through repeated experiences and messaging” (AIM 2012 p.10). This mode of thinking abounds and affects recruitment and promotion prospects of women to top management positions, (Ofei-Aboagye 1996 & Benneh 2001 & Asamoah-Dabri 2008). Stereotypic values and beliefs so often cloud the thinking of employers, at times, unconsciously since these values become so deeply embedded in cherished values and norms of organization, (Daft 1999; Rasdi et al. 2012). This scenario is explicit in Acker (2006 p.448):

Work is organized on the image of a white man who is totally dedicated to the work and who has no responsibility for children or family demands other than earning a living. Eight hours of continuous work away from the living space, arrival on time, total attention to the work, and long hours if requested are all expectations that incorporate the image of the unencumbered worker

The general perception worldwide is that women have home-maker roles and cannot effectively combine them with their managerial responsibilities or are much more committed to their gender role (Aycan 2004; Kottis 1996; Afedo et al. 2013; Benneh 2001; Yarguah 2008; Liff & Worrall 1997; Kottis 1996; Nagy & Vicsek 2008; Nesbit & Seeger 2007; Ismail & Ibrahim 2008). To dramatize this position, Kottis (1996) opines that two watermelons cannot be held by one hand. This notion supersedes considerations of capability and qualification for the job in management selection (Daft 1999). For example, a Hispanic executive professes:

“The fact that I graduated first in my class didn’t make as much difference as the fact that I looked different. ...it often considered “news” when a woman or minority is elected governor, promoted to general in the army, or named CEO of a major corporation (Daft 1999).

This disposition is quite erroneous. Many women who enter management position are determined to see it succeed and are highly committed to their managerial responsibilities, (Afedo et al. 2013, Aycan 2004; Nesbit & Seeger 2007) and do not allow the homemaker role to stand in their way, (Afedo et al. 2013 & Aycan 2004). This stance is outright discrimination as could be found clearly espoused by Hoobler et al.

...This means that even though male employees felt that their family conflicted more with their work than did female employees. Managers assumed that female employees were the ones who more frequently let family responsibilities conflict with work, (Hoobler et al. 2011 p.153).

Women are more effectively managing their work-home conflict as found in Afedo et al. (2013) “...many women managers do not allow their home-maker role to stand in their way in getting to top managerial positions”. The real problem is male attitude, the biases, the glass-ceiling, (Afedo et al. 2013) and manager attitude – the stereotyping, Hoobler et al. (2011) towards females.

Women are marginalized because they have accepted to single handedly perform the responsibilities that both sexes have to perform without complaint, yet society is failing to recognize the need to support women to cope effectively with their dual role, household responsibilities and formal sector work through effective management of diversity, by making changes in the work structure that has been heavily masculinized, (Acker 2013; Still 1994; Collins & Singh 2006) to accommodate women.

Benneh (2001) explains, “The under-representation of women in management in the financial sector (in Ghana) is not simply a reflection of occupational background, but Human Resources Management practices, particularly on selection, promotion and training”. Consistent with this position, Ofei-Aboagye (1996) reveals that women’s location in the formal sector is hinged among others, “the inclination of employers, what is considered suitable for a woman, and what is feasible giving her other obligations”. Emphasizing her position further she declares:

Hiring practices are sometimes influenced by considerations about the implications for maternity service in the organization: whether she will be a worthwhile investment given all the breaks for child-birth and health care. There are also perceptions of a “breadwinner ethic” in the system that indicates the man has more responsibilities and therefore, needs more jobs or more cash than a female with equivalent qualifications and accomplishments (Ofei-Aboagye 1996 p.32).

Just being a female is enough to disqualify one as a would, be successful manager. As a result of stereotype, no matter the status of the female whether highly educated or not, whether married or unmarried, whether one

has a child or not, whether one has made adequate provision for the home management or not, women are women.

2.4. Organizational Change and Gender

Organizations today are facing stiffer and stiffer competition both domestically and internationally and there is the need for internal changes to keep pace with the changes outside. Managers in present day highly competitive business environment are challenged by the many and varied changes going on within and outside the organization. These changes are mainly provoked through technological advancement and knowledge explosion which have brought in its wake political, economic, social reawakening leading to a diverse and better informed and radical workforce, customers, large scale businesses and globalization, (Nelson & Quick 2006; Nickels et al. 2002). These changes call for organizational re-engineering or redesign, a re-structuring where workers can best accomplish organizational goals through the optimum use of their talents and knowledge and not where managers do the thinking for workers through command and control, (Nickels et al. 2002). It calls for a different type of manager, a team player, (Eagly & Johannessen-Schmidt 2001; Nickels et al. 2002; Duehr & Bono 2006) the type of management style associated with women's style of management (Sharpe 2000; Duehr & Bono 2006). Duehr & Bono (2006) disclose that contemporary books and articles on management describe management work in qualities traditionally defined as feminine, such as helping and developing others, and building networks of relationships. Consistent with Duehr and Bono, Rosabeth Moss Kanter in Sharpe, (2000) claims women get high ratings on the skills needed to succeed in global information age where teamwork and partnering are so important. The hierarchical organizational structure, where managers are viewed as the epitome of knowledge and where command and control strive has to give way to the flat organizational structure which promotes teamwork. A corporate structure that has been skewed towards the male gender (ILO Report: Women in Management Update 2004) has to change and accommodate the values, beliefs, characteristics of its diverse workforce and stiff competition if it should remain competitive. Jack Welch, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of General Electric, cited in Daft, (1999 p. 425) cautions, "When the rate of change outside exceeds the rate of change inside, the end is in sight".

New findings are identifying female managers as having the competitive edge (Grant Thornton IBR 2011 & 2013, Sharpe 2000; The Guardian 27 September 1999). Evaluation of manager performance is beginning to show that women managers are out-performing men in almost all managerial skills (Sharpe 2000). Grant Thornton International Business Report (2011 & 2013) reveals findings from various studies which indicate that women in top management impact positively on the growth and profitability of organizations.

A study conducted in U.S.A by Kay and Shipman reported by Wolfe in the Washington Post Weekly Edition, July 20 - 26 2009 reveals that organizations with women at top management positions are becoming more profitable than those that depend heavily on male talents to run the business. Superior performance of organizations has been linked to gender diversity on management boards and having women in top management positions by a number of studies (Wolfe 2009; Grant Thornton IBR 2013 & 2012; Desvaux, et al. 2007). For example the Grant Thornton IBR 2013 report reveals a tracking result from fortune 500 companies from 2004 to 2008 which indicate that companies with the most women board directors outperformed those with the least by at least 16% in terms of sales and 26% in terms of return on invested capital. It is therefore not surprising when Nickels et al. (2002) linked success in management to the soft managerial skills - fostering camaraderie and allowing employees the freedom to make decisions as the way forward for businesses that want to remain competitive with today's diverse and radical workforce and globalized market,

This study investigates the perception of the Ghanaian employee about women's gender parity in top management position in the present day workplace. To achieve this aim the study focuses on the following: the correlation between management and gender, the perception about the performance of female managed organizations as compared to male-managed ones, and preparedness of organizations to appoint women to top management positions, the perceptions of employees about the impact that the low representation of women in top management might be having on organizations and the economy.

3. Methodology

The study covered twenty-five selected Public Sector Establishments in three regional capitals of the country. The use of only Public Sector Organizations is to eliminate personal interest which might be present in private and owner-managed organizations that might result in certain peculiar policies and practices and vested interest that might defeat the objective of this study.

Data were gathered through the use of questionnaires. In all two hundred and sixty questionnaires were administered to female and male employees of managerial and supervisory ranks. One hundred and thirty females

and One hundred and thirty males were sampled. One hundred and seventy useable questionnaires were retrieved – seventy-nine (79) females and Ninety-one Males (91). Purposive Sampling was used to identify and select persons in managerial and supervisory positions. The questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics and content analysis. The analysis tried to distinguish between the views of males from the females.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1 Gender a Determinant of Managerial Success

Respondents' opinion on gender as a factor in determining success in management is presented in table I below.

Table 1: Gender as a Factor in Determining Success in Management

<i>Responses</i>	Female Respondents		Male Respondents		Both Male & Female	
	N	%	N.	%.	N	%
YES	8	10	13	14	21	12
NO	71	90	78	86	149	88
TOTAL	79	100	91	100	170	100

The figures revealed a strong awareness that gender is not a determining factor of a person's suitability for a top management position. This is established by 149 respondents, which works up to 88% of the respondents. The remaining 21 respondents, representing 12% think success in management is dependent on the sex of the individual. No significant differences exist between the percentages of females and males that are convinced that gender does not constitute a determining factor of an individual's suitability for top management position.

In establishing the rationale for their choice, the popular opinion was that managerial skills are acquired through education, training and development and any of the sexes has the ability to acquire such qualifications and skills required in management. Some other respondents explained that experience has equally shown that there are good and bad female managers just as there are good and bad male managers. For example, a respondent stated, "God has endowed every human being with faculties, talents and brain. It is society that has brought about stereotypes and preferences".

The 12% that hold the opinion that gender impacts on a person's suitability for a top management position claimed, "women have proved to be bad managers". The gender stereotype was very visible when a respondent stated, "Women are home-makers and cannot be managers", another said, "Common sense tells us that women cannot be any man's superior". These respondents hold very strong traditional values as is evident in their responses. Though these respondents are literate and are high ranking officers in the formal sector, they are often caught up in the web of the theory of unconscious bias.

4.2 Types of Organizations Women Cannot Manage Effectively

Respondents were then asked if there are certain organizations that females cannot manage effectively and to state them, if any. Out of the sampled population, 158 making 93% were certain that females can manage all types of organizations. A male commented thus: "This question is unfair because women are equal to the task". Out of the 12 respondents which form 7% of those that think women cannot manage all types of organizations only seven of them stated the type of organizations they think females cannot manage effectively. These are the construction and engineering firms, the military service and organizations dominated by males. With the rationale being (1) that women are not physically strong to control such organizations. Unfortunately, however, at the top, managers depend mostly on their conceptual skills more than the technical skills and are mostly doing the thinking which involves planning and organizing rather than performing the tasks. The menial tasks and subordinate level duties that women do in these "non-feminine" occupations are more strenuous and tasking, demanding real physical strength. (2), that they would be unable to command the needed respect from the employees.

Comments by respondents supporting these two positions are reported below. The male respondents' comments include, "Subordinates will look down upon her as a boss simply because she is a woman and see her as lacking command of duty". "It is the general belief that men exert greater authority than women".

Some female remarks: "They can't climb heights because of fear of falling". "Men can handle problems and not be frustrated easily like females. Females lack 'manly heart', they get emotional where they have to face reality, they fear". Another said, "Some males would not want to work with women". These remarks simply re-echoed the stereotypic personality traits usually associated with the female gender.

4.3 Performance of Women in Management

Table 2: The effectiveness of women managers

<i>Responses</i>	<i>Female Respondents.</i>		<i>Male Respondents</i>		<i>Both Male & female</i>	
	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%.</i>
YES	73	92	88	96	161	95
NO	6	8	3	4	9	5
TOTAL	79	100	91	100	170	100

A corresponding question to that reported in table 1, tried to find out whether women in management make good managers resulted in similar responses. The popular opinion as depicted in table 2 is that women are good managers. Out of the 170 people who responded to this question only 9 which forms 5% think women are poor performers. As high as 95% are of the view that women do make good managers. There are no significant differences in the number of males and the females accepting that women make good managers. However, a significant proportion of those disagreeing are females. In establishing the rationale for their responses the male respondents comment as follows:

- Women, over the years, have proven to be good managers as well as very successful entrepreneurs, operating their own businesses even in areas considered to be the male domain.
- Women are, skillful, competent, careful, serious and diligent in the discharge of their responsibilities as managers.
- Women are ordained managers and could easily transfer their motherly traits on to the job.
- They are more dedicated, trustworthy and loyal when they are in such positions. They have essential managerial skills such as forecasting, controlling, and monitoring.

Some females also had these to say,

- Women are good planners, disciplined and hardworking; Women are more careful and serious with their work. I have observed women in management positions. They are as dutiful as the men;
- Women do not leave anything to chance. They are very meticulous.

The few, that is 9 respondents, which made up 5 %, who think females are not good managers expressed their views as follows:

They become tyrants and lack human feelings when they get to the top. Women can work but they must not become heads.” This respondent happens to be a female.

While it may seem unfortunate for a female to make such a statement, it is equally important to find out if women in the quest to become ‘organizational fit’, that is, adopting the masculine traits, are becoming ‘dysfunctionally’ aggressive, harsh and unemotional. O’Sullivan & Sheridan (1999 p.17) claim:

In shedding the trappings of femininity and seeking to replicate masculinity, women risk censure from both sides, indeed the existence of stereotypes makes it all too easy for women to find themselves in a role of an exaggerated caricature of masculinity which embodies all the worst facets of “aggressive” management.

Equally true is the gendered nature of the organizational culture, what gives the men the pluses if done by women turn minuses for women. The fact that a woman is able to match her male counterparts by coping effectively with the managerial responsibilities she is regarded as an abnormal female and given derogatory names as bitch, dragon, man-woman, (Still 1994; O’Sullivan & Sheridan 1999). Women often find themselves in a dilemma. The successful Manager is supposed to be aggressive, assertive, commanding and controlling, unemotional and women do not match these stereotypes. Women are to be or are stereotyped as timid, submissive, unassertive, indecisive, emotional, etc., (Schein 2007; Boon 2003; Hoobler et al 2011) for that matter women are not suitable top management candidates. Hillary Clinton being a woman invariably possesses the ascribed feminine traits. She is, therefore, not a suitable presidential candidate, but she is equally losing out because she is not emotional enough, (EMEA Diversity News 22 June 2008 Report).

Some males comment as follows:

- God did not make women to be heads;
- They often act on impulse, yet another said,
- They mess up when they are emotionally stressed out.
- Most women managers in my office hadn’t been good.

These male comments suggest that women do not think through issues well before taking decisions or acting and could, therefore, be prone to making mistakes. It also portrays women managers as people who cannot manage stress effectively. The negative pre-conceptions about women and their gender role still prevail among employees. These generic and archaic stereotypic characteristics associated with women worldwide are the reasons they are

often tagged unsuitable for top management positions, (Schein 1973; Schein 2007; Booyson & Nkomo 2010). Society has failed to understand that these are gender issues and not biological sex issues.

4.4 Comparison of Performance of Female Managers with their Male Counterparts.

The study explored the views of employees on three assertions about the effectiveness of female managers as against their male counterparts on a five-point Likert Scale of strongly agree right down to strongly disagree. The results are presented in table 3 below:

- A - Top level women managers are as effective as their male counterparts
- B - Female-managed public sector organizations are performing better than the male-managed ones
- C - Females make judicious use of the limited time at their disposal to turn out an appreciable volume of work just as their male counterparts

Table 3: Performance of Female Managers Compared With their Male Counterparts.

Variables	Response	Freq.	Obs. Prop.	P-Value	Gender	Freq.	Obs. Prop	P-Value	Uncertain
A	Agree	137	0.83	0.00	Male	61	0.45	0.23	4
	Disagree	29	0.17		Female	76	0.55		
B	Agree	68	0.50	1.00	Male	18	0.26	0.00	34
	Disagree	68	0.50		Female	50	0.74		
C	Agree	101	0.64	0.00	Male	39	0.39	0.03	13
	Disagree	56	0.36		Female	62	0.61		

4.4.1 Top level women managers are as effective as their male counterparts

Variable 'A' assessed the opinion of employees about how the effectiveness of the woman top manager is rated compared to her male counterpart. The results revealed that the effectiveness of women managers compares favourably with that of their male counterparts. The observed proportions of 0.83 and 0.17, resulting in a p-value of 0.00 indicates a rejection of the null hypothesis. It is certain, therefore, that women compared favourably with their male counterparts so far as their effectiveness as managers is concerned. This position is supported by a number of studies, (Afedo et al. 2013, Sharpe 2000, Grand Thornton IBR, 2011& 2013; Smith et al. 2005). Verification of the results from gender perspective showed no gender bias in the responses with a p-value of 0.23.

4.4.2 Female-managed public sector organizations are performing better than male-managed ones

Variable 'B' was not supported. The result recorded a mixed feeling, resulting in a p-value of 1.00. The null hypothesis is therefore, accepted, revealing that female –managed organizations are not performing better than the male-managed ones. An examination of gender connotation of the responses indicated a strong gender bias in the responses with p-value 0.00. The observed proportions are 0.26 male against 0.74 female who think female-managed organizations are performing better than the male-managed ones.

The gender bias and the high uncertainty rate of 20% of total respondents recorded suggest either a reluctance to accept the jarring but true position or perhaps for lack of comparative research on the performance of male and female managers in the country. These notwithstanding, a number of studies have indicated that women now have the competitive edge in management, Grant Thornton (IBR) 2011& 2013; Sharpe 2000; Wolfe 2009). While this may need further investigation, since findings are not yet conclusive, a number of studies have identified the stereotyped feminized personality traits as the drivers of present day competitive organizations, (Sharpe 2000; Harel et al. 2003; Nickles et al. 2002; Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001).

4.4.3 Females make judicious use of the limited time at their disposal to accomplish as much tasks as their male counterparts

The study assessed the disturbing phenomenon, the work-home conflict used in blocking the chances of women to progress to top management levels. A significant proportion of respondents agrees with the assertion resulting in a p-value of 0.00 leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. A significance test from gender perspective, however, indicated that it is women themselves who think they make judicious use of the time at their disposal to perform at par with their male counterparts in relation to turn out larger output within a comparatively shorter time. Males are not really convinced that women are effectively balancing the home-maker role and the managerial role. The test proportion of 0.39 and 0.62 male and female respectively thus placing the p-value at 0.03 confirms this position.

This comes as no surprise as it has simply affirmed the stance of many studies that, it is mainly men who normally

see the work-home conflict as a limiting factor to women’s inability to rise to the top, (Afedo et al. 2013; Kottis 1996; Aycan 2001; Nesbit & Seeger 2007; Hoobler et al. 2011). Women are often accused of lacking commitment to managerial work on the basis of not being able to put in the longer hours that men supposedly spend on the job. In a study conducted by Hoobler et al. 2011, men self-reported more work-home conflict than women but women were assumed to be the people who allow family to interfere with their managerial responsibility the most. It is common knowledge that scarcity gives way to caution and judicious use of resources. Time has become a scarce resource to women who have other duties competing for that same time. Bassier et al. (posted Jan. 23, 2005) observe that children impel women to become organized, effective and efficient. They argued that an 80 hour-work week is accomplished in 60 hours or fewer by women and men with children. This notion of longer or shorter hours brings to the fore a phenomenon referred to as ‘work presenteeism’, - spending more hours without necessarily having anything to do or better still, doing virtually nothing. This phenomenon could be discussed ‘in-toto’ in some other study. It suffices to draw attention to the fact that it is illogical to equate long hours on organizational premises to greater output. It is what one does within the time at ones disposal that really matters.

4.5 The Perception about the Underrepresentation of Women in Management on Organizations:

The perception about the under-representation of women in top management was evaluated using the following two assertions:

- D - The near absence of women in top management levels is affecting organizations negatively
- E - Organizations are not ready and willing to appoint women as top managers

Table 4: Impact of Underrepresentation of Women in Management on Organizations

Variable	Response	Freq.	Obs. Prop.	P-Value	Gender	Freq.	Obs. Prop.	P-value	Uncertain
D	Agree	65	0.45	0.28	Male	29	0.45	0.46	26
	Disagree	79	0.55		Female	36	0.55		
E	Agree	117	0.74	0.00	Male	49	0.42	0.08	11
	Disagree	42	0.26		Female	69	0.58		

4.5.1 The near absence of women in top management levels is affecting organizations Negatively

The assertion that, “the near absence of women in top management positions is affecting organizations negatively was evaluated on five point Likert Scale. Results registered a split decision as the observed proportions stood at 0.45 and 0.55 agree and disagree respectively, resulting in a p-value of 0.28. The result was then examined to identify gender connotations, if any. The *significant* test from the gender perspective stood at 0.46 thus eliminating gender biases in the result.

Studies have shown that there is an abundance of male manpower in the system (Afedo et al. 2013) coupled with other studies claiming it costs more to employ a woman manager than a man manager Schwartz (1989), could be possible reasons respondents do not think the low representation of women has any negative implications for the organization. If women managers, as this study indicated, are simply performing at par with the male managers then there is no added advantage to compel organizations to fill top management positions with women unless for the sake of social justice, if indeed it costs more to employ female managers than males.

4.5.2 Readiness and willingness of organizations to promote women to top management positions.

The results show that organizations are not yet ready to take on women as top managers. A p-value of 0.00 results in the rejection of the null hypothesis. A gender bias could not however be established in this instance as the observed proportions stood at 0.42 male as against 0.58 females with a p-value of 0.08 from the gender perspective. Stereotype gender roles are still intact (Asamoah-Dabri, 2008 and Yamoah, 2001). Research has also shown that there are more qualified male management candidates in the country than required (Afedo et al. 2013). Though there was a split decision with respect to gender, more women than men are convinced that organizations are tilted more to accepting males as top managers than females. From the proven performance records, it is absolutely unnecessary that the marginalization of women in the selection of managerial candidates continues but this appears to be the case. According to Frank (2001) it would take organizations 32 more years to achieve gender parity at the top.

4.6 Employee Preference for a Boss

Table 5: The Preference for Female Managers

Responses	Female Respondents.		Male Respondents		Both Male & female	
	N	%	N	%	N	%.
Prefer Female	28	35	19	21	47	27
Prefer Male	37	47	61	67	98	58
Indifference	14	18	11	12	25	15
Totals	79	100	94	100	170	100

This question tried to find out the sex employees would prefer as a boss should they be given the opportunity to choose between male and female managers. The results indicate a preference for the male gender as a boss. As high as 58% of the respondents prefer male bosses, as against 27% that endorsed female bosses. While an observed proportion of 0.60 females prefer female managers 0.40 males do so. On the other hand, while 0.38 females prefer male managers, 0.62 males prefer male managers. Obviously there exists gender bias in the results from gender perspective. Yet the fact still remains that both genders prefer the male boss to the female boss as 0.43 of the observed proportion of females prefer female bosses as against 0.57 that would go in for the male boss. The same applies to the males, with 0.24 preferring female bosses while 0.76 prefer the male boss. Findings thus support Frank (2001) claims that employees prefer male bosses to female bosses.

Respondents were also required to establish the rationale for their choice and a number of reasons were provided by respondents to support their positions. Those that prefer male bosses think that male managers;

- are more understanding and approachable than female managers.
- have the ability to withstand stress and so do not give up easily or get easily infuriated.
- have the time and are committed to their work.
- are confident and are able to command the respect of their subordinates.
- managers behave more maturely than female managers.

A very interesting response was this one, given by a male, "I don't know but I prefer males to females". This response is as good as saying, I prefer my own kind, male chauvinism, this is a respondent who indicated that gender is not a determinant of who qualifies for a management position, and gave the following reason, "Because both genders can do it if he or she has the knowledge and experience". One would have expected that such a respondent be indifferent but he prefers male managers for no apparent reason. A similar one is this, "All things being equal, a man is a better manager in all respects. I see a man as a symbol of strength and success".

Four main reasons have been provided for the dislike for female managers. They are generally perceived as being;

- insensitive to employee feelings especially to their female employees.
- saddled with family responsibilities and child bearing.
- jealous and envious of their female employees
- bossy and domineering.
- reluctant to delegate authority

A respondent stated, "I have worked under female bosses and they were just power drunk" Yet another claimed, they are authoritative and unapproachable,.

Those in favour of female bosses think

- Women exhibit certain important characteristics that are essential in management, for a example, trustworthiness, less corruptible, and dutiful. Others include tactfulness and diplomacy and being circumspect in making decisions. A respondent stated, "Women do not rush into taking decision. They listen and do not think they know it all".
- Females have proved to be good managers.

The good human relations skills that some respondents associated with the male manager was equally mentioned by some of those that prefer female managers as it is evident in these statements, "Women bosses reward performance". "Most of them are sympathetic and more honest". "They tend to regard subordinates as their own, provided the junior behaves well". This latter statement suggests that for employees to experience good manager subordinate relationship they must do the right thing as women managers would not let an undisciplined behavior go unpunished. It equally supports the general notion that women are uncompromising and strict disciplinarians.

5. Conclusion

Clearly, the underrepresentation of women in top management is not being seen as a problem to organizations.

Organizations still prefer male top managers to female top managers. These are clearly articulated in responses to assertions “D”, the near absence of women in top management positions is affecting organizations negatively and “E” Organizations are not ready and willing to accept women in top level management positions where the p-values stood at 0.28 and 0.00 respectively. The preference for male top managers is not, however, blamable on incompetence and lack of commitment to managerial responsibilities by female top managers. Unlike a number of international studies that claim women are outperforming their male counterparts as managers or at least it is advantageous to have women on corporate boards and top management positions (Grant Thornton IBR 2011 & 2013; Sharpe 2000) this study has shown that both male and female have the capability to be good managers and are simply performing at par. Though, the stereotyped feminine traits are gaining currency as the preferred managerial characteristics in modern economies (Eagly & Johannessen-Schmidt 2001; Nickels 2002; Duehr & Bono 2006; Sharpe 2000) the preference for the male gender still prevails. Regrettably too, employees, including females, do not want to work under women bosses. A lose, lose situation is what we see over here. Employers want the males to run their business and the employees prefer to work under males as bosses.

As has been established, the manpower requirement of organizations in the country is lower than what is available and men have flooded the managerial job market, (Afedo et al. 2013). This coupled with the fact that respondents did not think there is any added advantage in filling top management positions with females since both the male and female managers are rated as performing at par, there is virtually no reason for changing the status quo while women still have the homemaker role to discharge. But for now, there appears to be no performance reasons as to why women must not be accepted in top management positions. But the stereotypes of managerial positions as a male preserve remains intact. The perception that women’s absence from home has certainly created problems, Schwartz (1989) could not be ruled out. According to Frank (2001), it would take organizations thirty-two more years to achieve gender parity at the top. This hope of achieving equality in the future may fizzle out as a mirage if women do not take the bull by the horn. As Naomi Wolfe professes,

...It doesn’t matter anymore if “society is ready” for women to attain equal status; ready or not, “society” no longer has the power to stop women. For women now have the potential clout to create the conditions necessary for gender equality. The question now is not whether society is ready to yield gender equality, but whether women themselves are ready to take possession of it, (Wolfe in Still 1994:6).

In support of Wolfe, Desvaux, et al. (2007) opine, “... the increase in the number of female university graduates will not itself be sufficient to close the gap. Still (1994) advises women to fight for power since it will not fall like manner.

It is convincing to agree with Sharpe, (2000), that women are doing the work but they are not making it to the top. As they are considered workhorses only suitable for odious tasks in the lower and middle management position and with Rindfleish (2000) that advancement of women to top management positions does not rest on individual merit or competence but on institutionalized discrimination against women. And to support Amble (2005) suggestion that breaking the spell of stereotyping, is vital otherwise companies will continue to sub-optimize women and lose a vital talent pool that they frankly cannot afford to ignore.

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