

ATTITUDE OF MALE EMPLOYEES TOWARD FEMALE MANAGERS IN SELECTED ORGANIZATIONS IN GHANA

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ABSTRACT

The study examines the views of male employees working under female heads in selected organizations in Ghana. The research is significant because it testifies how male negatively regard female heads despite series of both international and national conferences and platforms that advocate for women to assume managerial positions at the workplace.

The study employed a case study and descriptive research design. The sample size was 122 respondents from 17 organizations. A purposive random technique was used to select only male employees who have worked or are still working under female heads. Questionnaires and secondary data were used to collect data. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze data which were presented into simple descriptive tables.

The study revealed that majority of the male employees (69.5%) preferred to work under male managers and coded managerial positions as masculine position. It is recommended, therefore, that male employees should embrace and integrate female heads in decision making positions, as women now constitute majority of the working population in the world.

Keywords: attitudes, influence, managerial position, negative, perceptions, positive.

INTRODUCTION:

The International institutions on women affairs have advocated for female rights on many platforms, forums and seminars. In some cases, educational and training programmes have been organized to recognize and welcome female managers in workplaces, but the situation has slightly changed. In Ghanaian society, managerial positions have been coded as masculine. This attitude runs through the homes to the workplaces. According to Herbert & Yost (1978b), attitudes have powerful influences on the behavior of people at work. This has created an environment where male subordinates do not effectively adhere to instructions emanating from female managers at workplaces. There are situations where the male subordinates might politely turn down the instructions from their female heads. Negative comments are often passed among males: “what is this woman saying?” Sometimes, the males do not basically applaud the efforts of females, because “women are always women”; no matter how educated they are, their reputations are still opposed by their male counterparts. Even with equal qualifications and achievements to that of their male counterparts, women are perceived less favorable in terms of their ability and accomplishments. This stereotyping tends to be reflected in evaluations and promotions and places women at a disadvantage for advancement (Eagly & Carau, 2001).

In Africa, the situation on females’ participation is worse. One of the major concerns of international bodies on women affairs advocate for women to be accepted into managerial positions but because of they are knowledgeable but it is also their basic human rights to be in management positions. The total female population in Ghana was reported at 49.13% in 2010, according to a World Bank report released in 2011., In spite of this significant number of female in the country, they are still not well represented when it comes to issues of managerial positions. Women represent a significant percentage of the total labor force worldwide (Ott, 1998; Vinnicombie, 2000; Vianen & Fischer, 2002).

Indeed, instructions from female supervisors are considered as an order or a punishment to male subordinates while instructions emanating from male managers are duly accepted and welcomed by male colleagues and subordinates. Why do women not have the right to be heads? Are managerial positions ascribed to men only? Or are leadership positions solely to be inherited by men? Almost any woman leader has a story to tell about how she made it to the pinnacles of her career.

The negative stereotypes attitudes toward female jeopardize the outputs of the institutions, making most organizations not achieving their set objectives. Closing the attitude gap is possible and certainly desirable as more women enter the workforce and move higher within the ranks of their companies. The benefits of improved attitude between men and women at work are numerous. These positive outcomes can include more effective teamwork, better sales results, more satisfied customers, higher job satisfaction, increased harmony and lower stress, and even reduced sexual harassment problems all consistent with human resource goals. The study examines only female managers and their male subordinates in discharging their organizational duties at the work place.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The general objective of the study was to examine the overall attitude of male subordinates towards female supervisors in organizations in Ghana.

The specific objectives were as follows:

- To assess whether male subordinates prefer working under female supervisors.
- To examine the attitude of male subordinates towards female supervisors.
- To analyze the negative stereotype traits for describing female managers.
- To identify views of male subordinates about female managers.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

- What are the views of male subordinates working with female manageresses?
- What are the attitudes of male subordinates toward female heads at the work place?
- What are the negative stereotypes characteristic of or associated with female manageresses?
- What are the views of male subordinates toward female heads?

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY:

The rationale behind the study was to examine how women in management positions in Africa, Ghana per se are perceived at their work places seventeen years after the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, China, and numerous seminars, workshops, counseling, which stressed on the importance of women assuming leadership positions in the societies they live and work. This will also add to the current body of knowledge

relating to the stereotyped attitudes displayed by male subordinates toward female bosses at the work place. It also helps to inform management of how the male population should perceive females; firms' policies can, therefore, be formulated to cater for attitudes on the job. The research serves as guide, platform and source of information to other scholars researching on a related topic. Furthermore, the findings are made available to students and the society at large to read and modify negative stereotyped attitudes toward female heads.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

The Influence Female Managers have on Female Subordinates:

The quality of the supervisor-subordinate relationship is of vital importance to an employee as well as an organization. It is the primary relationship articulated by an organization (ShockleyZalabak, 1988), and structurally it is the most important communication link in an organization (Downs, Clampitt, & Pfeiffer, 1988). Powell (1990) reviews literature on gender differences in managerial behaviour and concludes that there are no differences in task-oriented behaviour, people-oriented behaviour, and subordinates' responses to actual managers. Eagly and Johnson (1990) report that males and females are rated as equally effective by their subordinates. These findings would make one to conclude that either gender has a trivial, almost inconsequential influence on behaviour (Daniels, Spiker, & Papa, 1997), or female managers over time reject the feminine stereotype and adapt to the male-dominated corporate culture (Berryman-Fink, 1997). In a research conducted by Locke (1999), the hypotheses predicted that female subordinates under female supervisors would perceive significantly more supervisory mentoring than their gender dyad combinations. Even though significant interactions emerged for each dimension of mentoring, the hypotheses were disconfirmed since findings were not in the predicted direction. Female subordinates under female supervisors perceived the least mentoring behaviour. Not only do these results contradict the advice given to women that they need to acquire a female mentor (Ragins & Cotton, 1993), they also contradict the mentoring research which indicates female mentors provide more psychosocial functions to women than men (Burke, McKeen, & McKenna, 1993).

Attitude towards Women as Managers in the World:

Adeyemi-Bello and Tomkiewicz's (1996) study that was done in the United States indicates that males and females see successful managers as possessing characteristics that are generally ascribed more to men than women. In this study, a sample of 70 Nigerians, who were conveniently chosen from the southwestern part of Nigeria in 1993, was used to investigate the impact of gender on attitudes toward women managers. Most of the respondents were potential future business managers (i.e., college students majoring in business). The study revealed that Nigerian women have more positive attitudes toward female managers than their male counterparts.

Abdalla (1996) studied attitudes toward women in the Arabian Gulf region and compared Qatar and Kuwaiti implications. The samples included professionals, college students and parents of college students. The results indicated that samples consistently reported more favourable attitudes towards women than men. However, Qataris endorsed more traditional attitudes towards women than Kuwaitis. The results suggested that while Arab women are willing to accept more responsibilities in the political, occupational, educational and social spheres, Arab men are not willing to share these responsibilities with them.

Koshal M., Gupta A.K. and. Koshal,R (1998), (1998) conducted a study on attitude towards women managers in Malaysia. The results indicated that female managers perceive resistance from both men and women for their advancement and this resistance seem to be more at the subordinate levels. Other findings of a study about gender differences in attitudes toward women sales managers suggest that resistance exists to female managers in the Chinese sales force. Significant differences were found between responses gathered from the salesmen and saleswomen, indicating a more favourable attitude toward female supervisors by saleswomen than by salesmen (Liu, Xingguo, Haibin, Gongbing & Alan 2001).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The study employed a case study and descriptive research design. A descriptive research design allows the researcher to describe the specific characteristics of female heads, assess the negative views of men employees and how they see female heads at the workplaces. One hundred and twenty-two (122) respondents working in seventeen (17) organizations in Accra, Ghana were used as the sample size, using a purposive random technique to select only men who have worked under female supervision or are still working with a female heads. Questionnaires and secondary data were also employed to collect data for the study. The researcher used the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to analyzed data collected from the field into simple descriptive tables.

DATA ANALYSIS :

Objective one: to assess the willingness of male subordinates to work under female heads:

The findings revealed that out of the (122) men sampled for the study from the (17) institutions, (37.7%) disagreed, (32.8%) were undecided and only (29.5%) agreed that they prefer to work under a female boss. The two follow up questions that were also posed are: does one feel reluctant to having a woman as my head and does one have a preference for male managers to female managers. 31.2% do not feel reluctant have a female head, 25.4% were undecided and 43.4% said they feel reluctant in having a woman as their head. In the case of having a preference for male to female heads 63.9% agreed to have a male head. The findings here indicate some level of discrimination against women in our society.

Objective two: to examine attitude of the male subordinates working under female supervisors:

Table 1: Examining Male Subordinates’ Attitude towards Female Heads

Attitudes	Column1	Column2	Column3
Statements	Response	Count	Column %
Men employees take liberties with female heads	Yes	47	38.52
	No	51	41.80
	Undecided	24	19.28
	Total	122	100.00
Managerial positions are coded as masculine	Yes	57	46.72
	No	49	40.16
	Undecided	16	13.11
	Total	122	100
Female managers are labelled when they are decisive and take charge	Yes	69	56.56
	No	28	22.95
	Undecided	25	20.49
	Total	122	100

Source: March, 2012

When questions to examine certain attitudes male subordinates have towards female heads in organizations were posed to the 122 respondents, forty-seven(47) participants representing (38.52%) tested to the fact that they take liberties to do certain things that they will not do if the head is a male. Fifty One (51) respondents representing (41.80%) indicated that they would not take liberties and twenty-four (24) of the participants were undecided. The responses to the question showed that men could take liberties regardless of the sex under which they are serving.

Fifty seven (57) of the men testified that managerial positions are coded as masculine, forty nine (49) disagreed or said no to the question and sixteen (16) representing (13.11%) were undecided. This is a clear indication that majority of men in this part of the world still view managerial positions as masculine oriented. This statement welcomes the perception that there are certain professions or position when mention it is only for a particular gender.

The study further examined whether female heads are labeled when they are decisive and take charge. It came out that sixty nine (69) respondents representing (56.56%) agreed to the statement, twenty eight (28) respondents representing (22.95%) disagreed and twenty five (25) of the sampled men were undecided. The responses given affirmed that majority of the men sampled are not happy when a female head is decisive and doing her job accordingly.

Objective three: to analyze the views of male subordinates under female managers:

Table 2: Views of Ghanaian Male Subordinates about Female Heads

Identify the views of male subordinates	Column1	Column2	Column3
Statements	Response	Count	Column %
Female heads must be well trained before assuming managerial	Yes	86	70.49

positions			
	No	28	22.95
	Undecided	8	6.56
	Total	122	100
Female heads place family demands above work	Yes	69	56.56
	No	53	43.44
	Total	122	100
Female heads prefer being accorded with recognition than working hard	Yes	77	63.11
	No	23	18.85
	Undecided	22	18.03
	Total	122	100

Source: March, 2012

It was deemed important to analyze the views of sampled respondents if a female supervisor needs more training before becoming head. Majority of the male subordinates, eighty six (86), representing (70.49%) of the respondents, agreed while twenty eight (28) respondents, representing (22.95%), disagreed to the statement; 8 respondents were undecided. This means that females can become good leaders in supervision role if only they are trained adequately to manage their male subordinates emotionally and psychologically. Good training practices might also increase the organizational outputs which bring about profitability.

Majority of the respondents, sixty nine (69) representing (56.56%), affirmatively accepted the view that female places family demands above work consideration. Fifty four (54) participants, representing (44.26%), confirmed that female heads can perform well when they are given the opportunity to manage an organization. It is observed from the results that most men still regard women as people who can manage homes rather than workplaces.

Furthermore, it was an objective of the study to analyze whether female supervisors prefer being accorded with recognition at the workplace than working hard to achieve the organizational goals. Females at the top management class sometime believe that not all women can get there. Seventy seven (77) respondents, representing (63.11%), indicated that female heads prefer recognition to their status than working hard. Twenty three (23), representing (18.85%), disagreed and twenty two 22 participants, representing (18.03%), were undecided. This indicates that female bosses see their position as a mean to receiving praises and also commanding respect in the society.

Objective four: to assess negative perceptions about female heads:

Table 3: Negative Perceptions about Ghanaian Female Heads

Negative Stereotype traits of female heads	Column1	Column2	Column3
Female heads are slow in decision making	Response	Count	Column %
	Yes	51	41.80
	No	64	52.46
	Undecided	7	5.74
	Total	122	100.00
Female managers are not psyched to manage difficult issues	Response	Count	Column %
	Yes	40	32.79
	No	63	51.64
	Undecided	19	15.57
	Total	122	100.00
Female heads aren't free to take on time consuming task due to family commitments	Response	Count	Column %
	Yes	73	59.84
	No	43	35.25
	Undecided	6	4.92

	Total	122	100
There are specific roles in management which can be played only by males not females	Response	Count	Column %
	Yes	44	36.07
	No	69	56.56
	Undecided	9	7.38
	Total	122	100
Female heads are not consistent in discharging their duties	Response	Count	Column %
	Yes	36	29.51
	No	73	59.84
	Undecided	13	10.66
	Total	122	100.00
Female heads are emotionally not stable when faced with challenges	Response	Count	Column %
	Yes	61	50.00
	No	46	37.70
	Undecided	15	12.30
	Total	122	100.00
I can't make serious management decisions and contributions when a woman is my head	Response	Count	Column %
	Yes	38	24.52
	No	64	41.29
	Undecided	53	34.19
	Total	155	100

Source: March, 2012

The study discovered that among the 122 sampled, sixty four (64) of the respondents representing 52.46% disagreed to the statement that female managers are slow in decision making while (51) representing 41.80% respondents agreed. Seven (7) of the respondents were undecided to the statement. This finding, therefore, argues out that males have positive attitude towards female heads when it comes to decision making in an organization. Decision making is very vital to any organization, but the question most people might ask is: how quick decision should be taken? Quick decision making might bring out early solutions to certain problems arising in the work place.

Again, respondents were posed with a question if female managers are not psyched to manage difficult issues at work place. The study showed that most respondents (51.64%) disagreed to the view that female heads are not psyched to manage difficult issues; 32.79% agreed and 15.57%, undecided. A significant majority, therefore, disagreed that female heads are not psyched to manage difficult situations in the work place; thus, female heads are not good in handling difficult matters.

Most of the responses revealed that 59.2% agreed that female heads or supervisors are not free to take time consuming activities due to family commitments; 35.2% disagreed while 4.92% were undecided. It can further be explained that though the female managers possess all the qualities and carry out their duties well, family commitment sometimes act as barriers in taking on time consuming tasks.

In response to whether there are specific roles in management which can be played by only male not female, 36.07% believed that female managers can play any role, 56.56% disagreed to the statement while 7.38% were undecided. Simply put, majority tested to the fact that managerial positions are still only meant for men.

Again, the study further revealed that 59.51% said no, 29.51% agreed and 10.66% were undecided to the question whether female heads are not consistent in discharging their duties. The finding here revealed that female heads are consistent when it comes to discharging off duties carefully. Women by nature are very careful because of the motherly role they play in the society at large.

In response to whether female heads are emotionally stable when faced with problems at the work place, it

showed that 50.00% agreed that female heads are not emotionally stable when faced with organizational challenges while (37.70%) disagreed. Undecided respondents represent 12.30%. According to Sharpe (2009), a woman is chosen over a man because women are more stable, less turf-conscious, and better at "all sorts of intangibles" that can help an organization.

When a question to ascertain if male employees can make serious management contributions if a female happens to be their boss was posed, 41.29% of the responses revealed that the respondents disagreed, 24.52% agreed and 34.19% were undecided. It is indicated that majority of the male employees can make serious management contributions when a woman is a head. It is, therefore, deduced from the finding that women heads or supervisors do not act as impediment to males discharging their duties.

DISCUSSION:

In accordance with overall findings, it was confirmed by majority of the respondents (41.80%) sampled for this study, take liberties with female bosses, coded managerial positions as masculine (46.72%) and also labeled female heads when they are decisive and hard working. The researcher posed questions relating to whether Ghanaian men would like to work under female bosses. The result indicated that the majority (69.5%) testified they prefer to have a male head. The outcome of this study supported a related study conducted by Elle (2000), where the survey conducted indicated that about 33% of men and women would rather work for a man, while about 13% would prefer working for a woman; the remaining 54% had no preference. When asked who would be more likely to lead effectively, males were preferred by more than a 2-1 margin by both men and women even though women got high marks for being problem solvers and provide more supportive work environments. This indicated that despite the enormous role played by female heads most men still prefer to have male heads to supervise them.

Furthermore, the study has identified some significant level of discrimination against female heads in organizations in Ghana. In the concluding part, these are some level of discriminatory attitudes shown by majority of the respondents were not ready to work under female heads. Discrimination is formed regardless of the race of the person, the origin, location and the level of education the person has acquired in life. Discrimination is seen by many as the "simple-minded sexism of dirty jokes and references to 'girls', born of hatred and ill will (Kakar, 1984). This form of discrimination is blatant and easy to define, and most managers can honestly say they do not discriminate when it is defined in this fashion. However, discrimination occurs simply by treating women differently from men. Employees who perceive female managers as different from males often do not realize that they are guilty of discrimination. A related example was provided in a study conducted by Jain (1992) in which one woman was denied promotion in spite of excellent performance evaluations because her boss felt she would not be with the company very long; he assumed she would probably leave the company to have children.

CONCLUSION:

It can be concluded from the findings of the study that male subordinates do not want to have a female head because the female heads want to be accorded with recognition rather working hard, place family issues over job, and the men also believe managerial positions are coded as masculine. However, it was indicated that female heads are effective in decision making and polite in discharging their functions at the workplaces.

It is further concluded that there is still a significant level of discrimination against women who assume position of power and influence. This contradicts the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, China in 1995, which stressed that women should be given equal human rights to participate in decision making and hold managerial position in the environments in which they live and work.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is, therefore, recommended that international organizations in-charge of women affairs should till do more to educate individuals and companies that discriminate against women. Women must also be encouraged to welcome leadership or managerial positions, because companies in which women are more strongly represented at board or top management level are the companies that perform best as indicated by a research "Women Matter" by McKinsey & Company in 2007. Female supervisors must also play a mentor role to win the heart of male employees to also strive to take up challenging and high positions in our societies.

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