

Chapter 2

The Effects of Values and Gender Role Perceptions on Attitudes Towards Women Managers

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ABSTRACT

One of the key drivers of the development of societies over the past century has been the shift in women's social and economic position. Women have since been increasingly moving into the labor market, into employment, and into work organizations. According to the 2017 ILO report, women's overall labor participation is estimated to be 49.4%, and this rate increases to 53% for the East European countries. Even though women's participation in the labor force and in the front-line managerial positions is increasing, we are still far from achieving gender equality. Apart from the participation of women, a number of other issues remain to be tackled such as the under-representation of women in decision-making positions, the gender pay gap, and male-dominated work cultures. This chapter explores the effects of values and gender role perceptions on attitudes towards women managers.

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INTRODUCTION

Many theorists argue that gender typing (cognitive matching) of managerial positions or the socially constructed expectations for fit between the presumed requirements of these positions and attitudes towards gender roles play a significant role in the underrepresentation of women in positions of power (Aycan, 2004; Powell and Butterfield, 2002; Yoder, 2001). Managers are evaluated favourably or unfavourably depending on their match with the existing role schemas corresponding to their position requirements and level in the hierarchy (Lyness & Heilman, 2006; Aycan et. al. 2012). These shared conceptions of what kind of personal competencies are needed in a particular role and what the society consensually believes to be the attributes of men and women (i.e. gender roles) are expected to influence attitudes towards women managers.

Prevalent gender roles are learned through the socialization process and are transmitted through values. During the socialization process, majority of girls are encouraged to be submissive, warm, expressive, while boys are encouraged to be aggressive, competent, active (Basow, 1992). Traditional gender roles are found to create resistance of women in the workplace (Maddock and Parkin, 1993). Women in managerial positions therefore may be held back either by stereotypical prejudices or well-accepted structural barriers of long working hours, inflexible working patterns and expensive or no childcare (Maddock, 1999).

The women most irritated and affected by male cultures are those who are vilified precisely because they are radical managers. Gender debate within business and organizations focuses on senior women and on women's distinctive management style, but there is little recognition of the attitudes that are projected upon women managers and the reasons that lie beneath these attitudes (Maddock, 1999).

The chronic de-valuation and under-representation of women in positions of authority makes it necessary to understand the roots of negative attitudes towards women in management. Without such understanding, we cannot fully appreciate women's path to power, nor can we begin to speculate on how negative attitudes towards women managers can be changed (Eagly, 2007; Lyness and Terrazas, 2006; Aycan et al., 2012). Therefore, the current chapter aims to investigate the role of values and gender role perceptions on attitudes towards women managers.

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