

Chapter 24

The Next Generation of Leaders: Women in Global Leaderships in Hotel Management Industry

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ABSTRACT

The low number of female (expatriate) leaders in today's hotel management industry within the global business environment is a concern to most scholars writing on female executives. Most studies focus on the difficulties women face, while a minority of them examine the sources of their success. For academicians, it has been proven time and time again that differences between male and female do not warrant the fact that there are less women in leadership positions in the hotel and hospitality industry due to the claim that men are more qualified than women. For practitioners, however, many organizations have managed to demonstrate to the contrary of academicians, through the practice and maintenance of its corporate culture. The purpose of this chapter is to address two sets of stereotypes about female leaders in the hotel management industry: 1) the glass ceiling, the glass cliff, the glass border, and the pink collar ghetto or patterns of employment ghettos; and 2) the three persistent myths regarding female leaders in the hotel management industry.

INTRODUCTION

The internationalization of businesses has seen an explosion in research on cross-cultural research and a focus in general on expatriates. From the recent increase in research on female expatriates, it is clear that there is an important, and timely need for further investigation of this topic (Altman & Shortland, 2008; Guthrie, Ash, & Stevens, 2003; Selmer & Leung, 2003a, 2003b; Strout, 2001). Caligiuri and Colakoglu (2007) indicate that the future of multinational corporate competitiveness is contingent on corporations' ability to adapt to an increasingly global business environment, and that expatriation is an important HR practice. However, studies and surveys indicate that women continue to make up a small

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percentage of expatriates (Casison & Steinauer, 2001; Feltes & Steinhaus, 1998) and a small percentage of leaders in hotel management.

The demand for female (expatriate) leaders, nevertheless, is growing rapidly as it becomes increasingly necessary for firms to expand globally in order to create and maintain a competitive advantage in their industry. In today's global economy it is critical to attract, develop, and retain employees with global knowledge and experience. These employees represent the human capital that is a key resource for creating and sustaining a company's worldwide competitive advantage. Traditionally, (expatriate) employees have been overwhelmingly male (Adler, 1984a, 1984b). Females have been underrepresented in disproportion to the size of the qualified female labor pool (Caligiuri, Joshi, & Lazarova, 1999). Adler (1984a, 1984b) identified three myths in the academic literature and among practitioners and Tran's (2008, 2012) studies identified a fourth myth: (1) women do not want to be international managers/expatriate; (2) companies refuse to send women abroad; (3) foreigners' prejudice against women renders them ineffective; and (4) a view of the glass cliff through the window of the glass ceiling.

Glass ceiling is the term given to the invisible barrier between women and the executive suite, preventing them from reaching higher in the corporate ladder despite their merits and achievements (Forster, 1999; Gedro, 2010). McDonald and Hite (1998) refer to the glass ceiling as a 'pervasive corporate phenomenon' (Tran, 2012). This term is relabeled in international management as the 'glass border,' coined by Mandelker (1994) to denote the persistent under-representation of women in international assignments and the resulting lack of women in senior management. Thereafter, Michelle Ryan and Alex Haslam coined the term 'glass cliff' (Haslam & Ryan, 2008; Ryan & Haslam, 2005) to describe the few women who are able to break through the glass ceiling, only to occupy positions that can be described as precarious and thus have a higher risk of failure, either because they are in organizational units that are in crisis, or because they are not given the resources and support needed to thrive (Tran, 2012).

When testing these three myths empirically, Adler (1984b, 1994) found that only the second was grounded. Adler's work has profoundly influenced the literature on female expatriates over the last two decades, directing research towards the investigation of the structural barriers that female expatriates face (Harris, 1995; Linehan & Walsh, 1999a; Mayrhofer & Scullion, 2002; Stroh, Varma, & Valy-Durbin, 2000). As a result, even nowadays, when more women are present and successful in international positions (Adler, 2002), little research deals with how female expatriates themselves have achieved their professional success. The few studies (Adler, 2002; Adler, Brody, & Osland, 2000; Caligiuri, & Tung, 1999; Taylor & Napier, 1996) in this direction still tend to stress the role of the structural context, arguing that companies should give women more chances because of their unique potential and contribution. In sum, the existing literature on female expatriates largely portrays them as powerlessly caught in a penalizing structural context.

Nevertheless, the low number of female (expatriate) leaders in today's hotel management industry in international positions is a concern to most scholars writing on female executives (Adler, 1984a, 1984c; Stroh, Varma, & Valy-Durbin, 2000). Most studies focus on the difficulties women face, while few of them examine the sources of their success. The purpose of this chapter is not to produce a manual or a how-to informational handout for students or practitioners who study hotel management. The purpose of this chapter is to address two sets of stereotypes about female leaders in the hotel management industry: 1) the glass ceiling, the glass cliff (Haslam & Ryan, 2008; Ryan & Haslam, 2005), the glass border (Mandelker, 1994), and the pink collar ghetto (Gregg & Johnson, 1990; Rosen, Jerdee, & Prestwich, 1975) or patterns of employment ghettos (Pinar, McCuddy, Birkan, & Kozak, 2009); and 2) the three persistent myths regarding female leaders in the hotel management industry.

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