

## ATTITUDE TOWARDS FEMALE MANAGERS: A STUDY ON BANK EMPLOYEES

*Manju Mishra*

*Associate Professor, Department of Psychology, H. R. P. G. College, Khalilabad, SantKabirnagar,  
Uttar Pradesh, India*

---

**Received: 31 Jul 2018**

**Accepted: 03 Aug 2018**

**Published: 06 Aug 2018**

---

### ABSTRACT

*The present study attempts to examine the attitude of bank employees towards female managers. Female managers are generally considered stereotyped as being less competent and efficient as male managers. They are not considered fit for challenging and responsible positions. Employees generally prefer male managers as compared to female managers. This study aims to investigate this biased attitude towards female managers. Despite having achieved educational and professional feats, female managers do not get respect and recognition as their male counterparts get. In the presented study, 100 bank employees working in nationalized banks participated as subjects. Amongst the participants, 50 were male and 50 were female. In this sample, 56 employees had male managers at their workplace and 44 had female managers. A measuring scale 'WAMS' was used to investigate the attitude towards female managers. Results revealed a negative attitude towards female managers in male and female employees. Male employees had a significantly more negative attitude towards female managers. But work experience was found to be a significant variable for affecting the attitude. Those participants who worked under female managers had a significantly lesser negative attitude towards female managers than those employees who worked under male managers. The experience was found to be a significant variable affecting employee's attitude toward their female managers. These findings suggest that much have to be done for achieving gender equality in the organizations. The government organizations should do serious efforts to remove the gender biases against women leaders. Findings have been discussed with references to the role congruity theory and stereotype theory.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Stereotype, Role Congruity Theory, Work-Life Balance, Gender Bias, Glass Ceiling, Competence*

### INTRODUCTION

Women have achieved significant successes and accomplishment in the last few decades. Still, they are unrepresented at leadership positions. From politics to the educational field, from private sector to government sector, everywhere men are outnumbering women at leadership positions. This is not limited to Asian countries only but it is prevalent in developed countries like the United States. In 2015, only 5 percent of the companies in the Standard and Poor's 500 index had female chief executive officers. (Catalyst, 2015) this leadership gap is also present in nonprofit organizations too. In a 2015 Massachusetts study, only 21 out of 151 nonprofit organizations had boards with at least 50 percent women (Boston Club, 2015). In India, women are about 24% at entry level, then 21% and later their representation decreases at 19% and finally, they are only 14% at the top position. (Catalyst 2015) Much research has been conducted to examine the reasons behind this gap. Perception of a leader is being

considered a masculine work. Researches show that the 'think manager- think male' is a global phenomenon.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Research on women shows that both men and women think that a successful leader has mostly masculine qualities like aggressiveness, assertions. Koca et al (2011) Koenig et al (2011) have found that managers and the general population strongly believe that managerial success is associated with male characteristics and this belief is present from that male managers hold the same stereotyped image about women managers. Brenner et al (1991) have found in their research on attitude towards female managers than male managers and male students biased attitude. They considered managerial position mostly as a male characteristic, not female. Schein et al (1996) have compared the attitude of students from Japan and Germany with students from the USA, England, and Germany with students from Japan and China. It was found that the association of managers with masculinity is a common belief. The western and Asian management students perceived female as having poorer managerial skills than male. Only in one country USA male and female students perceived male and female as being equal and as having equal managerial characteristics. Koenig et al (2011) have conducted a longitudinal study over ten years on MBA students. They found that the attitude of male students towards female managers has remained consistently negative over the years in comparison to female students in the same group.

Women are sometimes afraid of labeled behaving like men, not as a woman. Johns (G) (1998) has found such results both women and men who describe themselves as having a greater degree of male characteristic are much more likely to aspire to top management. Butterfield and Grinnell (1999) asked management students to describe a good manager. It was found that while describing a good manager, students used male gender stereotype. Thus attitude toward female managers is always less favorable than male managers and manager role are mostly identified as masculine not, feminine.

Corlon et al (2006), Heilman (2001), Heilman et al (1995) have found that although acceptance of female managers has increased in the last half-century, negative attitude towards female leaders still persists. Eagly et al (1992), Heilmanstal (2004), Johnson et al (2008) have found in their research that female leaders are evaluated less favorably than male leaders. They are also less liked than male leaders and even are penalized for adopting masculine leadership styles.

Many studies have been conducted in an Indian setting too. Gulhati (1990) was the first Indian researchers who conducted a study on attitude towards female managers in India. He found that Indian female managers have a more positive attitude towards female in management than Indian male managers.

Cortis and Cassar (2005) conducted a research in Malta for identifying the barriers that hinder mature women from achieving the managerial position. The results indicate the difference between job involvement and work-based self-esteem of male and female managers. Balgiu B.A. (2013) has found male employees and non-employees had a less favorable attitude towards the female managers than female. But female students had a positive perception towards men as managers but, both male employees and students had a more stereotypical attitude towards women in management.

Thus stereotyped attitude like less competent and less efficient towards female leaders have been found as a universal phenomenon. Multinational researchers on 'attitude towards female managers' reported the universal existence of gender stereotypes attitudes against women leaders. Research conducted in different nations as in US- Dublo (1985),

Owner CL and Todor WD (1993) US Vschil Cordano Mark et al (2010) Greece Eleanna Golanki (2009), in India- Gulhati, K (1990), in Canada- Orser, Barbara (1994) and Egyot, Mustfa, Mohammad, M (2003), all the studies reported the existence of more or less negative attitude towards female managers. The researchers conducted their research mainly on undergraduate business students, M.B.A. students, HR professional and on many male and female managers. It was quite surprising that males had a less favorable attitude towards female managers than females.

### **Significance of the Study**

This study aims to understand the Indian attitude towards female managers. The Indian culture is the culture to respect and give a very high position to women, worshiping women and no work or ritual can be performed without women. But the present scenario is quite different. Presently women do not get the respect and opportunity that they deserve. Despite having the qualification and capabilities, they are not seen insignificant number at the higher position in organizations. The glass ceiling concept refrains them to go ahead to the higher position at workplace. They are sufficiently present at entry and middle level but not at the managerial level, Mc Kinsay (2015), 'women matter' research reported only 4% women at senior positions in India compared to the average of 11% in Asia. This reveals the attitude of men and women toward female managers. Finding of the study will reveal that when people will actually work with female leaders, then the stereotype will be weaker. It will be beneficial to understand the causes of gender biases against female leaders and effective measures could be adapted to eradicate those biases too.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

#### **Present Study has three Objectives**

- To investigate the attitude level of bank employees towards female managers.
- To find the difference in attitude of male and female employees regarding female managers.
- To find the difference in attitudes of male and female employees working under a male manager and working under the female manager in their banks.

### **HYPOTHESES**

#### **Following Hypothesis are Found in Study**

- Majority of the bank employee will have a less favorable attitude towards female managers.
- There would be a significant difference in attitude of male and female employees towards female managers.
- There would be a significant difference in attitude of employees working under female managers and employee working under male managers.

### **METHOD**

#### **Sample**

100 banks employees (Clerical grade) working in five government banks at Santkabirnagar and Gorakhpur districts of Uttar Pradesh participated in the study. Age ranged between 30-50 years. Amongst the 100 participants 50 were male (28 working under male manager and 22 were working under female manager) and 50 were women employees (28 working under male manager and 22 were working under female manager).

**Table 1**

Male Manager		Female Manager	
Male	Female	Male	Female
28	28	22	22
<b>Total 56</b>		<b>44</b>	

### Instrument

A Hindi translation of the women and manager scale (WAMS) was used to measure the attitude of the employees towards the female manager. The WAMS was developed by Petro et al (1977). This scale contains 21 items representing three factors.

- General acceptance of women as manager (10 items)
- Feminine barriers to full-time employment of females (5 items)
- Personality traits attributed to managers (6 items).

Every item is measured on a scale of 7 degrees from 1- strongly disagree to 7-strongly agree. Total of the score is calculated as attitude. High scores are associated with a favorable attitude regarding female leaders and low scores are associated with the negative attitude towards female leaders. Despite being an old scale, WAMS is the best available scale which measures the attitude towards women leaders. For the present study correlation between the score Hindi version and the originated WAMS was calculated and found 0.79.

The total score of the range between 21.147. An average score of one participant is obtained by dividing the total score by 21 which range from 1 to 7. An average score of 6 and more is assumed as a favorable attitude and score.

### Data Collection Procedure

Data was collected on bank employees in their banks. Employees from five nationalized banks were contacted and prior permission was taken. After paper instructions, the questionnaires WAMS Hindi version was administered. Firstly data was collected in two branches that have female managers. Then data was collected when the chief manager was male. The participants, both male, and female, took a keen interest in filling out the questionnaires and were enthusiastic about the results.

### RESULTS

Mean, S.D. and t-test was conducted on the scores of WAMS scale obtained by men and women bank employees. Table 1 shows a 74% of the employees have a less favorable attitude towards female managers, while only 26% of employees have a favorable attitude towards female managers. Thus the first hypothesis of the study is confirmed as more employees had a negative attitude to female managers. It is evident that female leaders are generally less preferred than male leaders.

**Table 2: Average Scores on WAMS Hindi Questioners (D=100)**

Level of Attitude	Frequency	Percentage
5.99 less favorable attitude	74	76
6.00 and above favorable attitude	26	24
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 3 presents the mean S.D. and t ratio of male and female employees attitude towards female managers.

**Table 3: Summary Table of Mean Scores and T- Ratio of Male and Female Employees on WAMS Hindi Questionnaires**

Sample	N	Mean	SD	S.E.D.	T- Ratio	Level of Significance
Male	50	5.24	.69	.17	3.7	0.01
Female	50	5.82	.72			

It is evident from the table that means the score of men employees is 5.24 while it was 5.82 for women employees.

The T-test was significant t ratio =3.7 P<.01 it means that men employees had a more negative attitude towards female managers as compared to women employees. The second hypothesis of the study is also confirmed.

Table 4 shows the mean S.D and t ratio of the score of male and female employees working under female and male managers.

**Table 4: Summary Table of Mean, Scores of Male Employees (N=50)**

Sample	N	Mean	SD	S Ed	T Ratio	Level of significance
Working under Male Manager	28	5.24	.84	0.20	2.4	0.05
Working under female Manager	22	5.72	.64			

It is evident from the table that means of employees working under male leader was 5.24 and mean of male employees working under a female manager was 5.72. Significant t ratio (t- ratio =2.4, P< 0.5) reveals that those males under female manager should more favorable attitude towards the female manager. The employees who had a male manager should less favorable attitude towards female managers. Table 4 shows the mean, S.D. and t- the ratio of a score of women employees who worked under male and female managers.

**Table 5: Summary Table of Mean score of Female Employees (N=50)**

Sample	N	Mean	S.D	S Ed	T ratio	Level of significant
Working under male manager	38	5.52	.69	.17	2.35	.05
Working under Female manager	12	5.92	.49			

It is evident from the table that means the score of female employees working under male manager was 5.52 and it was 5.92 of women who worked under the female manager. T- Test was also significant (t ratio 2.35, P< 0.05) it means that real exposure to female manager helped in having a favorable attitude towards them. Thus the third hypothesis of the study is also confirmed both, men and women employees who worked under a female manager should more favorable attitude to their manager.

To sum, the study had three finding

- Most employees (74%) had a less favorable attitude towards female managers.
- Male employees had a less favorable attitude towards female leaders as compared to female employees.
- Employees who had actual working experience with female manager had a more favorable attitude to them manager as compared to those employees who had worked under a male manager. This was found for both males a female employee.

## DISCUSSIONS

Findings of the study clearly demonstrate the prevalence of unfavorable attitude towards female managers. Women leaders are generally less welcomed at workplaces. Gender stereotype attitude seems to be a main reason for this. Stereotypical perception of a woman does not approve women as the leader. Leadership role is being treated as masculine roles not feminine. When a woman approaches leadership position she is not appreciated. This has been found in earlier research. Koenig et al (2011), Koca et al (2011) have found that management positions are associated with the male character. Butterfield and Grinnel (1999) had also found in his study the same results. While describing a manager the students used male gender stereotype. Koenig et al (2011) have found in their ten years longitudinal study on students that the attitude of male students towards female leaders has remained consistent over the years. Eagly et al (1992), Heilman et al (2004), Johnson et al (2008) have also found in their research that female leaders are evaluated less favorably than male leaders. Eagly and Karau (2002), Schein (1975) explains this gender bias as the discrepancy between the traditional gender role and the leadership role. The role congruity theory prepares those individuals who act in ways that are incongruent with their traditional sex. Role tends to be evaluated negatively. Schein (1975) found this incongruity creates the problem for female managers because characteristics necessary to be a successful leader are more frequently associated with the male gender role.

The second important finding of the study was the significant gender difference in attitude towards female managers. Male employees have a less favorable attitude towards female managers than their women counterparts. Significant gender difference regarding female leaders has been reported in many studies. Ayman et al (2009), Norris and Wylis (1995), Tomkiewicz and Adeyemi- Bello (1995) have found that male shows more biased towards female managers as compared to female. Balgiu BA (2013) found in his study on employees of a multinational company and M.B.A. students that although male and female employees both had a negative attitude towards female as manager female students had a comparatively positive perception on the female managers. This difference can be explained by role iconicity theory. Eagly et al (2002) found that whenever a female holds the leadership position, she is less liked because her new role is incongruent the traditional role of nurturing, submissive and tolerant women. This new role of leader, leadership role, is considered as the masculine role and the female leader is blamed for behaving like a man not as a woman. Male particularly have this bias because they feel that female are encroaching in the male field. Tender, caring, nurturing and tolerant women are more liked by men as compared to bold assertive and confident women.

The third and the noteworthy finding of the study was the effect of work exposure with female managers. When the employees had experience of working under the female manager, they evaluated them more favorably. This was found for male and female employees both. It seems that working with the female manager employees got the opportunity to understand them well. They could see the difference between the manager's hypothetical image and the real competence and efficiency. The day to day experience with the female manager sometimes changed employee's old stereotypes. This finding raises many hopes for a bright future of female leaders. Elsesser, Kim. M and Lever Janet (2011) have also found similar results in their study. They found that exposure to female bosses reduced bias against them. They found that those who had experience with a female boss were less likely to preface male management than those who had never reported to a women boss. Earlier Dasgupta and Aspari (2004) have reported similar findings.

Deutseh (2007) is very hopeful that the gender stereotype will be reduced or disappear as increased exposure to women leadership position. Fiske (2008) has also reported that the increased exposure to a particular person results in less stereotyping of that person. When we personally know a person we are less stereotyped. Martell (1991) has found that the fewer time respondents had to read a vignette about hypothetical male and female leaders, the more likely they were to give the male leader higher performance rating than the female leader. The studies conducted on real bosses in the actual organization had reported fewer stereotypes towards female leaders. The finding lists the lamp of hope for women leaders. It is hoped that with more inclusion of women in the leadership position the characteristics required for successful leadership will be seen as gender neutral rather than being seen as the masculine one. Thus the finding clearly indicates hope for future female leaders. Although a negative attitude persists at present time in future, this negativity will be reduced with more representation of female leaders at the workplace. Continues exposes female leaders will facilitate in changing the old stereotyped perception of female leaders and in future leader will be judged by their competence and skills not by gender, it is hoped.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS**

The present paper studies the attitude of bank employees towards female managers. It also analyzed the gender difference regarding attitude towards female managers within a group of male and female working under male and female managers. The old conception of think leader- think male was supported by the finding. Majority of the employees showed the less favorable attitude towards female managers. Generally, female managers are considered less competent and less qualified for the managerial position than the males. Gender was also found a significant factor related to an attitude towards female managers. It is male who has a more negative attitude towards the female managers not female. Females are less biased towards female leader. Being a woman themselves, women employees understand their female manager better and judge managers on the basis of competence, not by gender. Men on the other hand, are less inclined to accept women as manager. The old stereotype still exists in their minds, and they evaluate female manager from their biased perspective. When they find a female on leadership position they being to judge her according to old stereotypical way, in which only men can be fit in leadership and assertive roles and women fit in the nurturing and tolerant model. But the scenario has begun changing. With increasing representation of women leaders, the stereotypes are reducing. Present study supported this trend the employees who worked under a female manager was the less negative attitude towards their manager.

The present study has many practical implications. It raises hope for future women leadership. It shows that when people will work under the female leader, they will understand them better and the conception of leadership will change over course of time with an increase in female leaders. A successful female leader will set the example for leadership and women will be more accepted and liked as leaders. The study establishes the role of the real experience of working under female managers reduces the stereotype. If women should aspire equality, they should never hesitate to go to the higher position at workplace. Their old stereotypical perception and family roles should not come in their way to the journey of evolving as an efficient leader. Government and non-government organizations should promote gender equality at the higher position. Gender equality at the higher position is also very beneficial for the organization too.

## REFERENCES

1. Boston club (2015). "Stability isn't progress: The 2015 census of women directors' and chief executives of Massachusetts's largest non-profit organizations.' Marblehead, MA: Author.
2. Catalyst, "The Double-Bind Dilemma for women in leadership: Damned if you do, Doomed if you. Don't." July (2000).
3. Catalyst (2015a) Women CEOs of the SsP 500/ WWW. Catalyst. Org/knowledge/women-ceos-sp-500.
4. Catalyst (2015b) "Still too Few: women of color on boards." WWW catalyst. Org/knowledge/still-too-few-women-color-boards.
5. Catalyst (2017) "Quick take: women in the labour Force in India." New York, Catalyst June 27.
6. Eagly A.H and Karau, S J (2002). "Role Congruity theory of prejudice. Towards female Leaders". *Psychological Review*, Vol 109, NO.3, 573-598.
7. Elsesser, K.M. and Leva. J.(2011) "Does Gender Bias against female leaders persist? Quantitative and Qualitative data from a large-scale survey". *Human relations* 64(12) 1555-1578.
8. Heilman, M.E. and Tyler G.O, (2007) "why Are Women Penalized for Success at Male Tasks? The Implied Communal Deficit." *Journal of Applied psychology*, 92, No.1, 81-92
9. Heilman, M.E etal, (2004) "Penalties for success: reactions to women who succeed at Gender typed tasks" *Journal of Applied psychology*, 89, No-3: 416-427
10. Kernahan C, Bartholow B.D and Bettencourt. B.A (2006) "Effects of Category-based Expectancy Violation on Affect-Related Evaluations: Toward a comprehensive model," *Basic and Applied Social psychology*, 22, No-2: 85-100
11. Klerman, J.A. Daley, K, and Pozniak A (2012). "Family and Maternity leave in 2012." *Technical report prepared for the U.S. Department of labour Cambridge, MA: ABI Associates.*
12. Konrads Alison, M etal, (2000), "Sex Differences and Similarities in Job Attribute Preferences.' A meta Analysis," *psychological Bulletin*, 126 No. 4 593-641
13. Koenig, A.M Eagly, A.H., Mitchell, A.A, and Ristikari, T (2011). "Are leader stereotype, masculine? A meta-analysis of their research paradigms." *Psychological Bulletin* 137(4), 616-642.
14. Linda Schweitzer etal (2011) "6Exploring the career Pipeline: Gender Differences in Pre-Career Exploitations." *Relations Industrials* 6c, No. 3, 422-444.
15. Mengue, B, and Auh, S. (2006). "Creating a firm-level dynamic capability through capitalizing on market Orientation and innovations." *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 34(1), 63-73.
16. Meers, Sharon and strobe Joanna (2009) "Getting to 50/50: how working couples can Have It All By Sharing it all," New York: Bantam Books.



17. Nair, Preetu Venugopalan “Enrolment of women in higher Education Increases”, *The Times of India*, September 4, 2012.
18. Janjhua, Y., Chaudhary, R., & Verma, S. *Job Characteristics And Job Satisfaction: A Case Study Of Bank Employees*.
19. *Pew Research center Report (2015) Women and Leadership social and Demographic Trends*.
20. Rosalind C.B (2004), “Women And Multiple Roles: Myths and Reality,” *Harvard Review of psychology*, 12, No-3: 158-164
21. Sandberg S (2013) “*Lean In: Women, work And the will to lead*” New York: Knopf.
22. Schein, V.E. (1975). “Relationship between sex role stereotypes and requisite management characteristics among female managers.” *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 60, 340-344.
23. Shyamsunder, Aarti, Pollack Alexandra and Travis, Dnika (2015) *India Inc: From Intention to Impact*, Catalyst survey.

