
Full Length Research Paper

Workers Attitude toward Female Managers in Addis Ababa City Administration: The
Case of Nifas Silk Lafto Subcity)

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Article Info	Abstract
Article History Received: 8 April 2022 Published: August 2022	<i>The main purpose of this study was to investigate the perceived effect of knowledge management systems on decision making in the Addis Ababa City Administration. The study sought answers to basic questions related to knowledge identification, knowledge acquisition, knowledge transfer, and knowledge assessment, and their perceived effect on decision making. The survey conducted in the Addis Ababa City Administration, Nifas Silk Lafto Sub-city, revealed a direct perceived effect of the knowledge management system on decision making, with a substantial number of staff not performing at their best level. The research employed a mixed methodology, with community partnership facilitators, supervisors, officers, specialists, leads, coordinators, team leaders, managers, and directors as the subjects of the study. Questionnaires and interviews were the primary data gathering instruments, and statistical tools such as numbers, percentages, weighted mean, standard deviation, t-test, and chi-square test were used to analyze and interpret the data. The findings showed that knowledge identification, knowledge acquisition, knowledge transfer, and knowledge assessment were the key dimensions that had a directly perceived effect on the success of decision making, and the study recommended further enhancing the visions and career developments of female managers.</i>
Keywords: attitude, women manager, Addis Ababa City, Nifas Sub-city Silk Lafto	

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1. Introduction

Attitude is an expression of inner feelings that reflects a person's favorable or unfavorable predisposition towards an object. It has three components: affective (feelings), cognitive (beliefs, information), and behavioral (likely actions) (Zikmund, 2003). This study focused on the cognitive component, investigating the beliefs that workers hold towards female managers.

Stereotypes are structured sets of beliefs about the personal attributes of a group of people (Del Boca, 1979). Gender stereotypes relate to common views of males as more independent, objective, task-oriented, and better-suited for management, while females are seen as more sensitive, gentle, and less capable of high-level responsibilities (Terborg and Ilgen, 1975).

Despite efforts by international institutions to advocate for female rights and promote female managers, attitudes have powerful influences on workplace behavior (Herbert & Yost, 1978). Male subordinates may politely refuse instructions from female managers or make negative comments, as women are often perceived less favorably in terms of ability and accomplishments, even with equal qualifications (Eagly & Carau, 2001).

As more women enter the workforce globally, attitudes towards women in management remain an important issue. This study aims to compare attitudes towards women in management, as gender role perceptions in male-dominated economies and social structures often prefer male leaders, despite women's recent achievements in leadership roles (Murgai, 1999; Chen, 1997; Adler and Izraeli, 1988).

The study focuses on Nifas Silk Lafto Subcity in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, which has a significant female population and women in managerial positions, including the President and Chief of Justice. Examining the long-rooted gender stereotypical attitudes towards females in the workplace could provide insights into the potential discrimination they face (Ilgen and Terborg, 1975).

Globally, stereotyping of females as less competitive and less capable is not unusual. This is true in most countries regardless of their economic development. Multinational research on "attitudes towards female managers" has consistently reported the universal existence of gender-based stereotypes.

Studies conducted in the US (Dubno, 1985; Owen & Todor, 1993), comparing the US to Chile (Cordano et al., 2001) and Nigeria (Tomkiewicz & Adeyemi-Bello, 1995), as well as research in the United Arab Emirates (Elamin & Omanin, 2010), Greece (Galanaki, 2009), India (Gulhati, 1990), Canada (Orser, 1994), and Egypt (Mustafa, 2003), all concluded that there are negative attitudes towards women managers. Across these diverse contexts, women are viewed as being less qualified than men for managerial positions. Surprisingly, the studies showed that male subordinates often hold less favorable attitudes towards female managers than female subordinates.

In developing countries, women in managerial positions in the corporate world have been few in almost all countries. The 1995 Beijing Conference on Women sought to narrow the gap between men and women and provide equal opportunities. This goal has been achieved to a large extent in many developed countries - for instance, in the US, nearly 60% of adult women are in the workforce

and hold 51.4% of all managerial and professional positions (US Bureau of Labour Statistics, 2011).

However, the situation is different in Africa. In Ethiopia, where the culture is predominantly male-dominated and hinders the potential of females, one can expect similar or even worse results in terms of unfavorable attitudes towards female managers, as found in previous studies. However, the widely declared policy of promoting "equality in terms of education, job opportunities, and managerial positions" in 1996 (FDRE, 1998) may have led to some changes in attitudes.

This study aims to understand the attitudes of workers towards female managers in the case of the Nifas Silk Lafto Subcity in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Previous studies have often failed to consider "workers" as the unit of observation when analyzing attitudes. It is likely that the more individuals are exposed to female managers, the less biased their attitudes become. By focusing on workers who directly interact with female managers, this study seeks to provide insights that are less influenced by broader cultural biases.

The specific objectives of this study are:

- 1) To identify the gender stereotypical attitudes or characteristics among workers about female managers in Nifas Silk Lafto Subcity, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
- 2) To examine the factors that affect the attitudes of workers towards female managers.
- 3) To explore the major problems that hinder women managers from effectively exercising their responsibilities.

2. Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by the social role theory (Eagly, 1987) and the stereotype content model

(Fiske et al., 2002) to understand the attitudes of workers towards female managers.

The social role theory posits that gender stereotypes and expectations are shaped by the social roles that men and women occupy in society (Eagly, 1987). According to this theory, the perceived gender-based differences in characteristics and behaviors between men and women arise from the different social roles they typically assume, such as men in leadership positions and women in caregiving roles. These societal expectations and stereotypes can then influence the attitudes and perceptions towards individuals in certain roles, such as female managers.

The stereotype content model, developed by Fiske et al. (2002), suggests that stereotypes are formed based on two fundamental dimensions: warmth and competence. Individuals or groups perceived as high in warmth but low in competence (e.g., the elderly, housewives) are often viewed with pity, while those perceived as low in warmth but high in competence (e.g., rich people, professionals) are often viewed with envy or admiration. The model further suggests that these stereotype-based perceptions can shape attitudes and behaviors towards individuals or groups.

In the context of this study, the social role theory and the stereotype content model provide a theoretical foundation to explore how gender-based stereotypes and expectations may influence the attitudes of workers towards female managers, and how these attitudes are shaped by the perceived characteristics and competencies of female managers.

3. Methods and Materials

This study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative methods, to investigate the attitudes of workers towards female managers in the Nifas Silk Lafto Subcity of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. For the quantitative approach, a structured questionnaire was designed to collect data on the workers' attitudes towards female managers. The questionnaire included sections on demographic information, gender stereotypical attitudes, and factors affecting attitudes. The questionnaire was distributed to a random sample of 300 workers, and 265 valid responses were received, representing a response rate of 88.3%.

To complement the quantitative data, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 20 purposefully selected workers, including both male and female employees. The interview guide covered topics such as perceptions and experiences of working with female managers, challenges and barriers faced by female managers, and suggestions for improving the status and acceptance of female managers. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring themes and patterns.

The quantitative data from the questionnaires was analyzed using statistical software, including descriptive statistics and inferential statistics, such as t-tests and one-way ANOVA. The qualitative data from the interviews was analyzed using thematic analysis, where the interview transcripts were carefully reviewed, and codes were assigned to identify key themes and patterns. The integration of the quantitative and qualitative findings allowed for a more comprehensive understanding of

the research problem and the development of a holistic interpretation of the attitudes towards female managers in the Nifas Silk Lafto Subcity.

4. Results and Discussions

4.1 Descriptive Results

The survey respondents had diverse demographic characteristics. The gender distribution was 57.4% male and 42.6% female. The mean age of the respondents was 35.2 years, with the majority (54.3%) being between 30 and 40 years old. In terms of educational attainment, 42.6% had a bachelor's degree, 31.7% had a diploma, and 25.7% had a postgraduate degree. The mean work experience of the respondents was 9.5 years, with approximately 40% having 5-10 years of experience. Regarding their positions, 38.1% were in administrative roles, 31.3% were in technical/professional positions, and 30.6% were in managerial roles.

The respondents' level of agreement with gender stereotypical statements about female managers was measured on a 5-point Likert scale. The results indicated moderate levels of gender stereotypical attitudes. For example, the respondents tended to agree that "women are less assertive than men in managerial positions" ($M = 3.42$, $SD = 1.09$) and that "female managers are more emotional and irrational than male managers" ($M = 3.15$, $SD = 1.23$). However, they were less likely to agree with statements such as "women lack the necessary leadership skills for managerial roles" ($M = 2.87$, $SD = 1.17$) and "female managers are less capable of making tough decisions than male managers" ($M = 2.78$, $SD = 1.21$).

The survey also examined factors that may influence the workers' attitudes towards female manag-

ers. The respondents were asked to rate the importance of various factors on a 5-point Likert scale. The results suggest that exposure to female managers ($M = 4.01$, $SD = 0.92$) and organizational culture and policies ($M = 3.87$, $SD = 1.04$) were perceived as the most important factors in shaping their attitudes. Societal norms and expectations ($M = 3.72$, $SD = 1.11$), personal beliefs and values ($M = 3.54$, $SD = 1.18$), and media and cultural representations ($M = 3.41$, $SD = 1.23$) were also considered relevant, but to a lesser extent.

4.2 Correlation results

The correlation analysis revealed several significant relationships between the variables examined in the survey. First, gender stereotypical attitudes held by the respondents were negatively correlated with their exposure to female managers ($r = -0.42$, $p < 0.01$) and the organizational culture and policies in their workplaces ($r = -0.39$, $p < 0.01$). This suggests that greater exposure to female managers and more supportive organizational environments are associated with lower levels of gender stereotypical attitudes among the workers.

The analysis also showed a positive correlation between exposure to female managers and the organization's culture and policies ($r = 0.47$, $p < 0.01$). This indicates that organizations with more supportive policies and cultures tend to have higher levels of exposure to female managers. Additionally, societal norms and expectations were positively correlated with gender stereotypical attitudes ($r = 0.35$, $p < 0.01$), personal beliefs and values ($r = 0.42$, $p < 0.01$), and media and cultural representations ($r = 0.38$, $p < 0.01$). This suggests that societal influences play a significant role in

shaping individual attitudes and perceptions towards female managers.

Furthermore, the results reveal that personal beliefs and values were positively correlated with gender stereotypical attitudes ($r = 0.29$, $p < 0.01$) and media and cultural representations ($r = 0.35$, $p < 0.01$). This indicates that individual belief systems and exposure to media and cultural representations can contribute to the formation of gender stereotypical attitudes among the respondents.

Moreover, the correlation analysis provides valuable insights into the complex interplay of various factors, including organizational culture, societal norms, personal beliefs, and exposure to female managers, which influence the attitudes of workers towards female managers.

4.3 Regression results

The multiple regression analysis provided further insights into the factors influencing gender stereotypical attitudes among the survey respondents. The results revealed several significant relationships.

First, the analysis showed a significant negative relationship between exposure to female managers and gender stereotypical attitudes ($\beta = -0.31$, $p < 0.001$). This indicates that as the level of exposure to female managers increases, the respondents' gender stereotypical attitudes tend to decrease. This finding supports the notion that increased interaction and familiarity with female leaders can help reduce stereotypical perceptions.

The regression analysis also found a significant negative relationship between organizational culture and policies and gender stereotypical attitudes ($\beta = -0.21$, $p < 0.001$). This suggests that organizations with more supportive and inclusive environments, characterized by policies and practices

that promote gender diversity and equality, are associated with lower levels of gender stereotypical attitudes among their employees.

Furthermore, the results indicated a significant positive relationship between societal norms and expectations and gender stereotypical attitudes ($\beta = 0.21, p < 0.001$). This implies that the respondents' gender stereotypical attitudes are influenced by the broader societal context, including prevailing norms, beliefs, and expectations about gender roles and leadership.

The analysis also revealed a significant positive relationship between personal beliefs and values and gender stereotypical attitudes ($\beta = 0.13, p = 0.042$). This suggests that individuals' own belief systems and value orientations play a role in shaping their perceptions and attitudes towards female managers.

Lastly, the regression analysis showed a significant positive relationship between media and cultural representations and gender stereotypical attitudes ($\beta = 0.14, p = 0.010$). This finding highlights

5. Conclusion and Implications

5.1 Conclusion

There have been numerous studies examining the experiences of female managers across different regions, including Africa, Asia, and Europe. These studies have highlighted the widespread existence of fairness issues for female managers, which are receiving serious attention globally. Despite ongoing efforts to address these challenges, the situation for female managers in our country of Ethiopia remains inadequate.

This study aimed to examine attitudes towards female managers in the Nifas Silk Lafto Sub-city of Addis Ababa. Key variables such as respondents' age, gender, marital status, and education level

the influential role that media and cultural portrayals of gender and leadership can have on individuals' attitudes and perceptions.

The overall model explained 32% of the variance in gender stereotypical attitudes, indicating that the combination of the examined factors significantly contributes to understanding the formation of gender stereotypical attitudes among the survey respondents.

These regression results provide valuable insights into the multifaceted nature of the factors influencing gender stereotypical attitudes in the workplace. The findings underscore the importance of both individual-level factors, such as exposure to female managers and personal beliefs, as well as organizational and societal-level factors, such as organizational culture and societal norms, in shaping the attitudes and perceptions of workers towards female managers.

were analyzed to evaluate their impacts. The findings indicate that participants generally support the participation of female managers in the workplace. However, male workers outnumber female workers in the Addis Ababa City Administration, Nifas Silk Lafto Sub-city, despite women's equal competence. The study also found that the more educated the women, the more positive their perceptions of managerial roles.

The research revealed that women in Addis Ababa City display ambition, assertiveness, self-confidence, and competitiveness, but these qualities are hindered by poor enabling environments. Negative stereotypes and lack of awareness among workers towards female managers persist, creating barriers to their advancement.

The City Administration is actively working to empower women and increase their representation in managerial and leadership positions. However, the study found that men's attitudes towards women in these roles remain relatively negative.

5.2 Recommendations:

a) For Government Sectors:

- Provide capacity-building opportunities to develop women's knowledge and skills
- Assist women in employing effective managerial approaches and tools
- Offer comprehensive training in management and innovative decision-making
- Encourage women to engage with critical issues

b) For Addis Ababa City Administration:

- Equip female managers with necessary facilities and support
- Organize continuous professional development activities to enhance women's skills and experience
- Initiate programs to boost women's ambition, assertiveness, self-confidence, and competitiveness, as these qualities are essential for the city's administrative progress.

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare that there's no conflict of interest concerning to the publication of this article

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